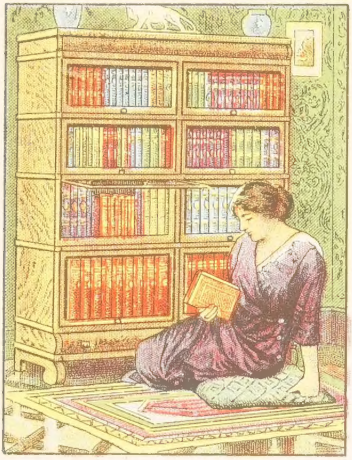
ROMAIN ROLLAND

LILULI

WITH THIRTY-TWO WOOD
ENGRAVINGS BY FRANS MASEREEL

FROM THE LIBRARY OF
Jacob J. Cohan



The
Walden
Book
Shop
307 Plymouth Court
Chicago

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_Y0-CGU-244

LILULI

ROMAIN ROLLAND

LILULI

WITH THIRTY-TWO WOOD
ENGRAVINGS BY FRANS MASEREEL

COPYRIGHT, 1920, BY
BONI & LIVERIGHT, INC.

Printed in the United States of America

Brugnon, you rascal, you're laughing! Aren't you ashamed?

What'd you have, my friend, I am what I am. Laughter does not prevent me from suffering; but to suffer will never prevent a real Frenchman from laughing. And whether he laugh or shed tears —first of all he's got to see!

Long life to Janus Two-face with his ever-open eyes! . . .

Colas Brugnon.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

LILULI, ILLUSION—fair-haired, slim, small—big blue eyes, candid and sly; slender, girlish arms, a smiling mouth that shows her little teeth; a musical voice, the sound of which has power to stir the soul. She glides rather than walks; she seems to float in the air. She wears a fanciful Botticelli dress of periwinkle blue, trimmed with a wreath of green and golden leaves.

CHIRRIDI [CHIRRIDICHIQUILLA, that is to say: Little Swallow-voice]. TRUTH—a dark gypsy type, with flaming eyes, supple, quick, violent—knows how to wield both tongue and knife. Harlequin costume, with a big black scarf, which, thrown over her shoulders, falls in two points like the closed wings of a swallow.

THE GODDESS LLÔP'IH [OPINION]—A dumb part. Hallucinating apparition of a barbarous and Hindoo idol, at once coarse and sumptuous—black and gold—copper face.

THE BEAST [of Dürer] her escort. Dumb part. Cathedral devil. Color of an old gargoyle, black and mossy.

MASTER-GOD—handsome, majestic and dandified old man; long white beard with patches once fair, now turned green; slightly Levantine accent; noble gestures which re-

lapse into vulgarity when he is off his guard; the gravity of his speeches retains a certain odor of the suburbs.

POLICHINELLO—well-known; big, badly trained old dog, goes poking his nose into everything, lifts his leg on everything; always in good temper. Worn-out maroon costume, braided with silver, with little bells.

ALTAÏR—a beautiful Italian Renaissance youth, Perugino or young Raphael type, with floating blond hair [eighteen years].

ANTARÈS—his friend, same age, same style.

JANOT, THE DONKEY-DRIVER—typical peasant of central France in a blue biaude [smock] wide and long as a night-shirt; greasy black felt hat glued to his head.

HANSOT—Typical Baden peasant. Janot is thin and burnt as a vine-stalk. Hansot is round and blond as a pat of butter.

POLONIUS—he belongs to all the Academies and Palaces of Peace, wears a court-dress sword, is decorated and be-ordered from head to tail.

THE GRAND KHAN.

THE GRAND DERVISH.

OLD PHILÉMON.

GUILLOT THE DREAMER.

ARGUS SANTEUIL.

TWO RECRUITING SERGEANTS [Trafalgar Square style].

BURIDAN THE ASS.

CHORUS OF YOUNG MEN AND MAIDENS.

CHORUS OF CHILDREN [and their PEDAGOGUES].

CHORUS OF INTELLECTUALS.

THE FETTERED BRAINS [and their NEGRO].

THE FAT MEN.

THE THIN MEN.

THE DIPLOMATS.

THE WORKERS [two half choruses].

GUARDS.

SHOPKEEPERS or PEDDLERS.

CROWD OF GALLIPOULETS.

CROWD OF HURLUBERLOCHES.

Dumb pageants [or perhaps it would be truer to call them inarticulate]—LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY; THE HEADLESS MAN, LOVE AND REASON.

Pageant of ARMED PEACE.

Pageant of TRUTH [Bussolanti, Journalists, etc.].

Pageant of OPINION [Satyrs, Apes, Cossacks, etc.].

Time and place being fanciful, the dresses should be equally fantastic. The freest variety. Every figure should wear the costume of the epoch which best corresponds with his character—but freely interpreted, so that the whole may produce a gay and brilliant harmony.

A smiling plateau, grass-grown and shady, on the slope of a mountain that overlooks, to the right, a vast landscape of plain.

The stage is divided in two, from back to front, by a narrow ravine, spanned by a rickety foot-bridge.

In the foreground a road, which, after having followed the footlights for a little to the right, winds inward toward the ravine, mounts again to the left, and only reappears at a terraced bend above the stage before it finally vanishes. A second road also comes up from the right and joins the first in front of the foot-bridge. In the background a third road mounts from the back of the stage on the right, comes out on the brink of the ravine, and crosses the foot-bridge to join the road in the foreground.

Big rocks overhang the stage on the left and at the back.

NOTE—The stage must have considerable depth in order that the two crowds may face one another on either side of the ravine in the second part of the play.

The back of the stage is, of course, considerably raised so that the audience may lose no detail of the scene.

Enter from the right, by the road which comes up on the fore-scene from the valley below, a crowd laden with furniture and every kind of familiar or curious household object. Some push or pull hand-carts; others are pulled along by little donkeys. They are more noisy than efficient and make but slow progress, though they look as if they were in a great hurry; for they turn back at every moment, either to pick up one of their innumerable and absurd parcels which they have dropped, or to argue with their neighbor, give him a helping hand, or, preferably, a piece of advice, playing the fly on the wheel. Most of them, having reached the plateau which constitutes the stage, halt to take breath and mop their faces. Then they resume their ascent. The procession is almost uninterrupted during the first part of the play, but it must not interfere with the action.

The principal actors, Polichinello, Janot, Lilulì, Altaïr, Master-God, etc., when they speak, will take their places in the field which occupies three-quarters of the left foreground, which is higher than the road, without, however, hiding the ravine and the plateau on the opposite side.

CHORUS OF YOUNG MEN AND MAIDENS

What a lovely morning! Spring laughs for joy. The blue sky is pure, intense and hard; it shines between the lovely bare branches of the trees. Under their arms the sun kisses their russet autumnal fleece. The golden carpet of dead leaves is pierced by violets. How cool, sweet and young the new air, like a straw-

berry on the tongue! Boys, girls, how good it is to walk together, straight ahead, without another thought of the old barracks we had to leave, the shaky walls of the old antiquated city, thing of the past! . . . Blessed be the flood that forced our old people to leave it all, extracted the incrusted from their shells and now constrains them to tread reluctant the joyous road that mounts, ay, and follows us toward the future!

LILULI, ILLUSION. She appears at the moment at the terraced turn of the road on the left, overlooking the stage. She sings like a bird:

Laïra-ira-ira! . . .
Laïrette! Laïrette! . . .
Fara-diddle-dino,
The future's very fine-o!

She disappears.

THE YOUNG MEN AND MAIDENS drinking in the apparition with eyes and lips, their arms uplifted toward it.

Did you see it? The bird! The little warbler that guides our way? Illusion! Liluli! . . . Wait for us, wait!

They run. They bump into Polichinello, coming back down the road with his strutting, jerky walk.

POLICHINELLO

Woa, woa, my little lads! Let's not lose our heads! Hold up, colts and fillies. Walk, walk! Why run? Are you afraid that someone may steal your moon, your brand new moon, swinging afloat on her thread of air and waiting for you to catch her there in your mouths? Look you there how she bends her bow on the summits whereto you're going!

THE YOUNG PEOPLE in ecstasy before the mountain peak.

Where we are going? Is it there, Polichinello, is it there? On those heights that sparkle bright?

POLICHINELLO

You'll be there before the dusk.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE

Before this eve! And shall we see, above the prison wall, free space for all and the horizon and the dreamed-of-land—the Hesperides, Atlantis, Canaan?

POLICHINELLO

Ah well, I will not say you've all of that to-day. The Promised Land, my Benjamins, is always for next day.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE

To-morrow! to-morrow! . . . We shall be there before the others. Come, let's run. And you?—are you coming? . . . Are you going back?

POLICHINELLO

I act the sheep-dog. Back and forth from one end of the flock to the other I run. I round up the laggards. I bark at the old fellows. I bite the rumps of the young rams. And I maul the little ewe lambs.

He suits his action to his words.

A GIRL whom he has given a pinch and who boxes his ears.

Ow! Ow! He's bit me!

The Young Men and Maidens pursue their way.

POLICHINELLO already occupied in questioning an old couple.

Hie! Philemon! Hie! old dad! So, you've come out here to see the country?

THE OLD MAN, sadly pointing toward the valley whence he has come.

My country? That's down there!

POLICHINELLO

One's country is here and there. A country is the people who live in it.

THE OLD MAN

My heart still lives there.

He points to the valley.

POLICHINELLO

But here now are your rheumatics. Come along and warm them in the good sunshine, this air steeped in resinous smells.

THE OLD MAN

Ah, nothing can come up to my dark corner by the old stinking stove.

POLICHINELLO bursting out laughing.

Every man regrets his own dunghill.

A MAN pulling a hand barrow.

I'm taking mine with me.

POLICHINELLO to the crowd that passes loaded with luggage.

Gently, now gently! Take a moment's breath. What greyhounds! Fairly streaming with sweat! 'Ware the flood! You flee from it out the valley and bring it along with you in your basket on the hills. . . . You'll burst, my friend. Your eyes are popping out of your head, like a crayfish—quick-stew with spices. Take breath, take breath! The air belongs to everyone. Look at this landscape now! Isn't it pretty? Isn't it well painted? You can touch it. The colors are fast.

THE CROWD

Forward! March! No time to look. . . . They say the folk of the other village are coming up too. . . . We've got to be the first.

POLICHINELLO

The world's a large place.

THE CROWD

They'll go and take it all.

POLICHINELLO

There's room for two at least.

THE CROWD

For us first. . . . Afterwards for them. . . . Forward! Forward! We mustn't stop. . . . Lord! how heavy it is! I shall split. . . .

POLICHINELLO

And that'll bring you a great way forwarder!

THE CROWD

What a plague! I'm always the one to suffer. My load is the heaviest. Look at that fellow! He's only got half of mine.

POLICHINELLO

Would you like to change?

THE CROWD

Idiot! . . . Why not, you with your hump? Do you think that I'd give him my goods and chattels for love?

POLICHINELLO

Then don't complain!

THE CROWD

I will complain if I like. Complaining and whining, without the least desire to make things better, envying one's neighbor's lot, without the least desire to change one's own—these are what help one to support life. . . . What a wash! If only one could keep it up!

They pass off.

A BAND OF CHILDREN surrounded by their schoolmasters in spectacles, with crooks and little lapdogs in coats on the leash; they clap their hands.

O, the flowers! the new flowers! The green lizards! The yellow round eyes of the primroses! And that bird with the touch of red in his hat. Heh! How the little one whistles! Peep, peep, peep. . . .

THE SCHOOLMASTERS

Will you please keep to the middle of the road! In line! Eyes down! And look at your books!

THE CHILDREN

But we should so much like to look round on the road!

THE SCHOOLMASTERS

That's unnecessary. We are going to tell you about it. Read: "When Hannibal crossed the Alps. . . ."

THE CHILDREN

But what about us? What mountains do *we* pass?

THE SCHOOLMASTERS

You are not the point. Read: "When Hannibal . . ."

THE CHILDREN

But us! but us! When do we come in?

THE SCHOOLMASTERS

In two or three hundred years. Everything in due time.

A LITTLE GIRL with a little impertinent snub nose.

When we're all dead?

THE CHILDREN singing to the tune of "Malbrough."

". . . And dead and underground. . . ."

THE SCHOOLMASTERS going on imperturbably. . . .

And dead and underground. From now till then, read, read "When Hannibal . . ."

THE CHILDREN singing.

. . . Nibal went out a-fighting,
Mironton mironton mirontainé,
That animal, that Hannibal
Who knows when he'll come back?

They pass.

POLICHINELLO to a grizzled man, who laughs alone as he walks and seems to be talking to himself, his eyes half closed.

Ho! Guillot the Dreamer, always in good cheer? What tale are you telling yourself?

GUILLOT THE DREAMER

I am describing the landscape to myself.

POLICHINELLO

But you don't look at it.

GUILLOT

I see, I see. . . .

POLICHINELLO

With your eyes stuck in the dust?

GUILLOT

I see farther, I see higher, I see the summit, the light.

POLICHINELLO

You'd do better to see first of all what's round about you.

GUILLOT

Where I am doesn't interest me. But where I shall be—perhaps.

POLICHINELLO

Or where perhaps you won't be. In that case you won't have been here or there. They'll write on your tomb: "Here lies Guillot who saw nothing, neither lived at all."

GUILLOT

I'm in such a hurry, I live ahead of the time.

POLICHINELLO

To live ahead of life, my friend, is to be already dead. Thank heaven, I go slow.

To a man of thirty-five or forty who looks at him and turns on everything that surrounds him a pair of clear cold eyes.

And what are you thinking about, Argus Santeuil?

SANTEUIL

I am looking at you, looking at him; I see everything, these men and those, you and the others; they are all madmen. And I see the landscape, neither beautiful nor ugly, just as it is; it makes me neither hot nor cold, sad nor gay. I never lose my compass, never dream; I see, I see the sky, the clouds, the dust of the road and the pebbles, the flowers, the dung. I see everything.

POLICHINELLO

But you don't live any the more for that. You see life. You don't possess it. The sole wise man among fools is the craziest of the lot.

Janot the Donkey-driver appears on Master Buridan his ass at the corner of the road, to the right.

Ah! There's my Janot the Donkey-driver and his ass, master Buridan.

THE ASS

Hee-haw! Hee-haw!

He digs himself in with all four hoofs and refuses to go a step further.

POLICHINELLO

One carrying the other, they go on, on . . . they don't go on at all. . . .

JANOT gets off, lays his face to the donkey's cheek and speaks to him cordially, trying to persuade him.

Come now, brother, one step more! Hoof it still a bit; we're just there. Giddap, my boy! But it's the others that giddap. They're passing you. You're not going to humiliate me before the passers-by, are you, my Buridan? Don't you want me to pull you? Give in, now. Come along, my beauty. . . . [Suddenly, with fury.] Ah! you swine. . . .

POLICHINELLO

Man proposes, the ass disposes.

JANOT

And why not? After all, if it's his idea. . . . His idea's as good as another. I'm not pig-headed. [To the ass.] Have you looked it over, made up your mind? Once . . . twice . . . thrice. . . . Done! Here or there. I don't care a curse. Let's stop.

POLICHINELLO

Aren't you ashamed of obeying your jackass?

JANOT

No quarrels in the family! It's the wisest thing. [To the ass.] Go and roll. As to me, I install myself here. The soil's rich. The position is excellent, well protected. Let's take a look round. . . .

POLICHINELLO

What are you going to do?

JANOT

Dig. As for you, don't you come in here! There, now, this is my field.

POLICHINELLO

The brigand loses no time.

JANOT

"Janot Close." "Buridan Meadow."

He stretches a rope.

POLICHINELLO

Are you staying there? They're leaving!

He points to the passing crowd.

JANOT

They'll come back. The world is round. They'll come back in the long run. And besides, we shall see. . . . By the time they've all filed past, in any case we shall have dug up this little slice.

POLICHINELLO

What good does that do you, if you're to leave it?

JANOT

It's not for my sake; it's for hers.

POLICHINELLO

Whose? Hers!

JANOT

For my sweetheart. [He points to the earth.] Phew! It's too much for me. When I see a piece of ground, widow or virgin, she calls me; I have got to comfort her.

POLICHINELLO

You old wanton!

JANOT

To every man his vice! With one it's land, with another girls.

POLICHINELLO

A pleasant time to you, my lad. Work, work away; burst yourself! For me—I look on. Nothing's better for one's health than looking on while others work. The shade is delicious. Sweat away, good people! Let's quaff the fine weather and the grimaces of the passers-by.

He sits down in the shade on a bank overhanging the road. Janet digs; the ass browses and the people go on streaming past. In the distance, behind the scenes, the sunlit song of Liluli is audible. . . .

"Laïra, ira-ira! . . ."

Altaïr rushes in on the stage. He is out of breath from having run uphill.

ALTAÏR

Did you see her pass?

POLICHINELLO

Who, my lad?

ALTAÏR

The magical bird.

POLICHINELLO

Liluli, the enchantress?

ALTAÏR

Since last night I have been in pursuit of her. I hear her in front of me . . . her song goes hopping from tree to tree. At the bends in the mounting road, when I come running up, I see her fluttering skirt disappearing round the next turn, see her bare heel fleeing. I came near to catching her, but by stooping

an instant to pick up her silver brooch I lost her and can find no trace of her more. . . . Liluli!

POLICHINELLO

You would do better to leave her alone. The fowler may easily be caught by the bird.

ALTAÏR

That's all I desire.

POLICHINELLO

In that case, stay right here. If you fly from her, she looks for you. If you look for her, she flies away.

ALTAÏR

Let me go! Let me go! Don't delay me any more!

POLICHINELLO

Fool! Shut your mouth, stay quiet. I'll warrant the moment she doesn't hear you after her, she'll come back to find you.

ALTAÏR

Do you think so?

POLICHINELLO

I'm sure I can see her sly little nose! She's there on the watch.

ALTAÏR

Where?

POLICHINELLO

Wherever you are. Do you want to see her appear? Then come, let's speak ill of her.

ALTAÏR

Never, never.

POLICHINELLO taking him by the arm.

Come along, open your eyes! I promise you a sight that is worth a great deal more than your insipid little goldy-locks.

ALTAÏR

Who? These beggars, this jostling, sweating crowd? A fine sight indeed!

POLICHINELLO

Are you jealous? Like you they are running after your lady-love. . . . But I have better to offer you. Look! Here comes the pageant of Our Lords.

ALTAÏR

The Lords of what?

POLICHINELLO

My Lords, your Lords, those that lead us.

ALTAÏR

Nobody leads me. I am a free citizen of a free republic.

POLICHINELLO

Exactly. The names of those who are passing will not be unknown to you, then. But as to their faces I bet you never troubled to look at them. Take advantage of the opportunity. I will show you your gods *au naturel.*

The procession begins.

ALTAÏR

Who's that headless monster who comes along first, taking great strides?

POLICHINELLO

At the head the man sans head? You know him, my friend; it's Life. Look at his chest, like to a fortress, the pillars of his thighs, his arms swollen with sap like the great limbs of a tree. . . . A passing waterspout rushing past. A torrent of breath and blood. Let us pant and march and strike! And, so that nothing bother us, let's imitate him—off with our heads!

ALTAÏR

He emits a whiff like a menagerie as he passes. Ugh! a smell of raw meat and lions' cages!

POLICHINELLO

How well you act the disgusted! Do you think you smell of ambrosia, my little wild beast.

ALTAÏR

I am a soul.

POLICHINELLO

A beast like any other. Don't you trust her! She has teeth. She doesn't live on the air that passes.

ALTAÏR

I know the one with the bandaged eyes who's coming now. Through his bandage I long to kiss his

hidden light. It is my master. He is Love. O, my belovèd!

POLICHINELLO

There's your schoolboy who has never looked at life save in books! Wrong, grossly wrong! Your portrait of Love is two thousand years old. It's ceased to be a likeness. That blind fellow with the frozen features your eyes devour so greedily, isn't love. No, my friend, it's Reason.

ALTAÎR

What say you? Reason? . . . Away with you! March! I'll have no more of her. . . . Shameless creature! By what right has she stolen from Love his bandage?

POLICHINELLO

The bandage comes to her by right. She distrusts her eyes. Since they might prevent her from following her logic, she shuts them, and goes on, straight ahead, without flinching. There! bump! against that chestnut-tree! Ow, ow, ow! She has broken her nose. Her calculations were quite right, 'twas the tree that made a mistake. What does that matter? She goes on. A bit of her dress is left behind on the brambles. But that people should see her—well, her skin, doesn't alarm her. . . . Now she's by the stream! She's like the mules, she walks along the very brink. But how will she manage to get across

here? Hold up, hold up there! She stumbles, falls. . . . No, she's got across. But those who follow our tight-rope dancer are not so lucky; they get a ducking. But that won't cool their enthusiasm. Forward, my lads! Straight ahead, always straight ahead! Ah, it's a fine thing, the straight line! Besotted ones! Long live my hunch!

ALTAÏR

What's this fellow doing, staring at me and chuckling? Will you please clear out? Fool!

POLICHINELLO

Well done! That one you're snapping at this time is Love.

ALTAÏR

Love? That little idiot? Good, now he's beginning to snivel. . . . So he isn't blind any more?

POLICHINELLO

It's just as though he were. He's a little feeble minded.

ALTAÏR

Come now, my young tap, haven't you finished dripping? [He wipes Love's eyes.] He laughs. The rainbow. . . . He has pretty eyes.

POLICHINELLO

They're not to see with. Only to play pranks with.

ALTAÏR trying to catch Love's glance.

What do you see? What do you want? What are you thinking about? Where are you going?

Love escapes from him.

LOVE

A, e, i, o, u!

Plays a shrill arpeggio on his Pan-pipes, skips away, kissing the ass as he passes; the ass shakes his ears; Love runs off, followed by a gamboling kid.

POLICHINELLO

He sees nothing, wants nothing and thinks of nothing. He is indifferent to everything that passes. He just passes.

ALTAÏR, his eyes fixed in the direction where Love disappeared.

How beautiful he was!

POLICHINELLO

It's always like that—after he has passed.

Noise of a heavy brigade, marching with a ponderous beat; breathless bugles. At the head of the procession—all of them loaded with knapsacks and arms—is a stout man, tightly strapped into his uniform; plumed helmet of an Offenbach soldier, enormous knapsack, saber and rifle—sweating, puffing, mopping his face.

ALTAÏR

What harness to wear when one has to climb a steep hill without shade in the middle of the day! You're mad, my friends! Throw away your shells! . . . Are they convicts condemned to hard labor? Who is that fat black beetle, pot-bellied and whiskered, who, like Agamemnon, marches, rolls along at their head?

The fat man stumbles.

POLICHINELLO

It's Peace advancing—advancing backwards.

ALTAÏR

Peace!

POLICHINELLO

O, well, of course—Armed Peace. Gribouille threw himself into the water because he was afraid of the rain. These fellows are so afraid of the fire that they put it at their tails.

ALTAÏR

Silly beasts of burden! With all that ironmongery on your backs, you'll never, never be able to get up to the top. Do as this sage does. [He points to Janot's donkey.] All fours up, roll on the grass!

POLICHINELLO

They would ask nothing better.

ALTAÏR

Who prevents them?

POLICHINELLO

The donkey-driver.

Enter Liberty; Phrygian cap; shirt open on a hairy chest; a carter's whip in her hand.

LIBERTY

Giddap! Goramighty, g'lang! Get on! Forward, citizens. Get on, you jackass, or die! What's the matter with this lubber? His girths are slipping. [To Equality.] Holy wench, give me a hand and help me tighten up the straps—the hog-yoke! of this free man.

POLICHINELLO

My son, salute your god.

ALTAÏR

Who? This foul-mouthed person?

POLICHINELLO

"Liberty, sweet Liberty! . . ."

ALTAÏR

And the other one?

POLICHINELLO

That's her sister, gentle Equality.

EQUALITY pulling tight the straps.

I'll burst your belly for you!

Equality, who had laid down a certain object on the roadside in order to tighten the man's girths, picks up the object and sets off again.

ALTAÏR

What's that she holds in her hand?

POLICHINELLO

A pair of shears. . . . Come away, don't stay too close. She cuts, gnaws, clips. Ooh, ooh! Clear out, you ugly woman, get away!

ALTAÏR

Whom has she a grudge against?

POLICHINELLO

Against everything that exceeds.

EQUALITY gives him a buffet.

In with your hump!

POLICHINELLO

Anch' io son aristo! . . .

EQUALITY

Dress by the right! Form fours, to the left!

LIBERTY

Forward! Liberty or Death!

She cracks her whip; the troop begins to set off.

ALTAÏR

And this one who comes last? This half-naked nigger in a top-hat and a napkin under his chin, arm in arm with a clergyman?

POLICHINELLO

That's Fraternity. Be careful, he's very vicious. He's a cannibal, but he uses a fork and says grace before meat. . . . This good education is the work, my child, of civilization. That worthy chaplain, whom you see at his side, never leaves him a moment; carefully he points out to him those who are not his brothers, so that he may have no hesitation in eating them.

ALTAÏR, in despair.

Ignoble mockery! No! I won't look any more. . . . All I love and respect travestied in forms grotesque or repulsive! Fraternity a cannibal, Liberty with her horse whip leading men in chains! Reason blind and Love an idiot! What's the good of living? What for?

LILULI appears behind Altaïr. She seems to rise from the meadow and floats a little above the earth, her feet just touching the flowers of the white poppies without bending them. She covers Altaïr's eyes with her hands, overstepping him, as she floats, by a head and shoulders.

For me.

ALTAÏR starting.

Beloved! Here you are!

He tries to turn about.

LILULI

Don't stir! Stay like that!

Keeping her hands over Altaïr's eyes, she presses his head against her bosom.

ALTAÏR

I feel your bosom pulsing, I hear your heart beating, beating against my neck. From your fingers on my eyes, your flowery cool-tipped fingers, your being flows like a stream into my burning flesh. I am faint with love. You are here, you are here!

LILULI

Is all well like this?

ALTAÏR

All is well, all is beautiful. [Suddenly, as though he were waking up.] But all the same—those images, those monsters that I have just seen?

LILULI

You have dreamed.

ALTAÏR

All the same . . .

LILULI bends over his still closed eyes and brings her face and her breath close to Altaïr's face, close, close to his mouth, as though she were going to lay her lips on it; but she does not touch it, and her lips remain suspended above it, as her feet over the poppy heads.

You're dreaming. . . . Look now.

ALTAÏR in ecstasy.

What bright new light! The sun burns no more. The bitter acrid smell of dust and sweat raised by the human cattle has ceased to reek from the blinding roads. The cool breeze caresses me, like your hands. I feel the sweet breath of the acacias floating, like your lips, in the air. Harmonious beings march embraced, to a splendid and joyous rhythm. Liberty clears the road for them, pushes aside the brambles from their path. As Juno, causing the Milky Way to jet from her round breast, a stream of milk flows from the berry-red nipple that Fraternity presses between loving fingers. And hidden among the trees I hear Love and Reason cooing voluptuously, like a pair of turtle-doves, coupled, beak to beak. O Life, I have found your lost face again. . . . How good, how beautiful it is!

He sinks down asleep in the arms of Liluli.

LILULI

Lullaby, baby, lullaby.

She kisses his eyes, lays him gently on the ground, wraps his head in her veil, then, speaking to the soldiers of Armed Peace who are still filing past —artillerymen with their cannons—she says to them:

Now, take him. He'll sleep sound on that gun-carriage.

They take Altaïr and carry him away.

POLICHINELLO

Purr away, panther with the gold-flecked eyes, lick your cruel teeth and lips with the tip of your pink tongue. Is it good, the taste of blood?

LILULI

Delicious.

POLICHINELLO

Hyrcanian tigress!

LILULI

Birmanian goose!

POLICHINELLO

Aren't you ashamed?

LILULI

Ashamed? What is there wrong? Don't I make people happy?

POLICHINELLO

You hand this child over to the executioners.

LILULI

He wouldn't change places with a king. To sleep on a cannon dreaming of Fraternity . . . could anything be pleasanter, at twenty? I'm sure it tempts you, too.

She approaches Polichinello with an engaging smile.

POLICHINELLO recoils.

No, thank you! God be praised, I'm more than twenty. I have never appreciated my good luck so much as to-day.

LILULI coming yet nearer.

It's never too late to be happy.

POLICHINELLO draws further back.

No, thanks! I've been long reformed.

LILULI

What a pity!

POLICHINELLO ironically.

And me such a handsome fellow, too!

LILULI

Not so bad, you know.

Polichinello bursts out laughing, but allows Liluli to come a little nearer.

And if you wish it, I can get you accepted, as a special favor.

POLICHINELLO again draws back.

No, thanks.

LILULI

Why do you move? You have a sound pair of legs at any rate. March a little, let me see. Swing your arms, lift your legs. . . . What a fine soldier!

POLICHINELLO

Yes, I should be good at running away.

LILULI

That's something. In these days, my friend, one can only run from under one fire into another. So I undertake you will always be a hero. Don't worry.

POLICHINELLO

I don't worry at all. A hero on a bier. . . . I prefer beer in my gullet.

LILULI

But you'll get it, in addition to everything else. Cool beer, good cheer, glory, obituary . . . "O glo-

rious dead, I envy you!" . . . by one of the great gentlemen of our Academies, whose greatness keeps him, poor man! on the hither shore; or else an oration by Frédéric Masson. Just tell me what you want. There's nothing one wouldn't do to please you, rogue! I have quite a weakness for you.

POLICHINELLO

For me?

LILULI

For your pink nose, for your face like a laughing moon before its first quarter, for your handsome goggle eyes, round and wide like a falcon's; your gay humor and your walk, like the walk of a dancer who, for greater convenience on his tight-stretched rope, has swallowed his balancing pole.

POLICHINELLO

Have you done laughing at me?

LILULI

Don't you know that a woman must always mock a little the one she loves?

She tries to draw near.

POLICHINELLO

Keep your distance, wanton!

LILULI

Do you mistrust me?

POLICHINELLO

I am afraid of your tongue.

LILULI

Are you afraid of my lips, too?

POLICHINELLO

No. . . . Yes. . . . Polichi, my boy, you're in the soup. . . . No, stop!

He recoils at the moment when she has almost touched him.

LILULI

Coward! To reassure you, would you like me to hold up my hands? . . . *Kamerad!*

POLICHINELLO

How white and plump your arms are!

LILULI

Feel! They're genuine. Best wall fruit, silky, downy . . .

Polichinello puts out his hand, withdraws it, extends it once more. Meanwhile Liluli has advanced, without his realizing it, and his hand touches her.

Cold . . . hot . . . boiling.

POLICHINELLO

Hum! I have it.

LILULI

He's caught!

POLICHINELLO, feeling her.

A peach . . . velvety and sugary. [He puts his arm round her waist.] What deceptive thinness! Who'd have thought it! . . . Plump as a quail, well-covered, cushiony. . . . Tell me, how did you manage to look so diaphanous, a mere shadow, a breath, a soul, without flesh or hemispheres, when you were putting that little canary in his cage?

LILULI

My little sleeper? To each his favorite groundsel.

POLICHINELLO

A cuttle-bone for the canaries!

LILULI

For the dreamers of twenty, the soul. The body is nothing, nothing but an accident. Isn't that so, Polichi?

POLICHINELLO

Nix, nix; as for me I don't live on souls. I've got a very good appetite.

LILULI

Glutton! I hope you're well served.

POLICHINELLO

I can satisfy myself here. In this orchard I see plenty to eat and drink.

LILULI

Phew! but this is not the right moment.

POLICHINELLO

Why not?

LILULI

Not in front of everyone!

She points to the people passing in the road.

POLICHINELLO

I'm not at all embarrassed.

LILULI

But I'm bashful.

POLICHINELLO

It's a good thing you said so; one wouldn't have guessed it.

LILULI

Come this way.

POLICHINELLO

Whither away?

LILULI

To these bushes.

She drags him toward the road.

POLICHINELLO

I'd prefer somewhere farther off.

LILULI

Don't twist your neck like a heron, you coward. Look into my eyes.

POLICHINELLO

I don't see myself very beautiful in them.

LILULI

You will be, you are, if I like, if you like. Do you want to be handsome?

POLICHINELLO

And what can you offer me?

LILULI

Anything you like: one hump more . . . or less. At your will. I can make your body straight as a young reed, your nose white as a lily, and there, in your chin, the most coquettish dimple.

POLICHINELLO

Come, come!

LILULI

By my breasts! Look well in my eyes. Closer, closer. Do you see yourself in them?

Walking backward, she draws him on to the edge of the path, on to the bank overhanging the winding road. She continues to retreat and floats out

over the void, unnoticed by Polichinello, who is not looking down at his feet. But he comes suddenly to his senses, just as the ground is failing beneath his feet, just in time to throw himself backward and escape from two sturdy fellows with hang-dog faces—recruiting sergeants—who are lying in wait at the bottom of the ditch to pick him up.

POLICHINELLO springing back.

Rooti-toot-toot! I see it's Jack's fate to be hanged!

ONE OF THE RECRUITING SERGEANTS rising up with a recruiting poster on a sandwich-board.

Gentlemen, for glory's sake!

POLICHINELLO

Go and catch other conies!

LILULI

Are you leaving me?

POLICHINELLO

Catamite!

Followed by the recruiting sergeants, he climbs up a fruit-tree.

ONE OF THE RECRUITING SERGEANTS at the foot of the tree, nose in air.

Come, sir, come. They're only waiting for you. Everybody has enlisted. Come now, we're shutting up shop. Look at these uniforms! This helmet would suit you nicely. It's a bargain. Would you like some gold lace? There, there, sir, come down!

THE OTHER RECRUITING SERGEANT

Come down, you devil, or I'll climb up and unhook your moon-face.

POLICHINELLO

Look out for the plums!

He bombards them.

SECOND RECRUITING SERGEANT

The coward! He's a *franc-tireur!*

FIRST RECRUITING SERGEANT

That isn't done. Kindly understand, sir, that a single man, if he isn't a soldier, has no right to defend himself. It's criminal.

POLICHINELLO

Ah! how nice it is to be a soldier!

SECOND RECRUITING SERGEANT to Liluli, pointing at Polichinello in the tree.

What are we to do, ma'am, with this hunch-backed pumpkin hanging up there? He's a danger to the passers-by. Shall we pick the fruit?

LILULI

No, no; we'll let him ripen. Sooner or later, the melon will come and offer itself upon our plates. It's not quite ripe and ready yet. We must wait till the sun has gilded his flanks.

POLICHINELLO

You can wait, then!

LILULI

I shall have you.

THE RECRUITING SERGEANTS

We shall have him!

POLICHINELLO

Never! Laughter is a weapon against Illusion.

LILULI

You're mistaken, my good friend. You work for me. You think yourself clever because you "don't believe in it." "You don't believe in it," you laugh; but you do as the rest do. Laugh away, my boy, laugh! Your laughter helps the men I enlist to march.

And you march, too. Tiddledy-widdledy! Mustn't bother about it.

POLICHINELLO

Gallows-girl, lying wench! . . . But isn't she pretty, though, all the same!

LILULI looks at him, laughing.

Good-by, my lover!

POLICHINELLO

Don't show your teeth like that in the sun; they'd make a man want to be eaten!

LILULI

Melon, I shall have your slices!

THE RECRUITING SERGEANTS

We'll get 'em!

Polichinello stays in the tree. Liluli, followed by the Recruiting Sergeants, makes her way towards Janot, the donkey-driver, who has gone on, all this time, quietly digging his field.

THE RECRUITING SERGEANTS pointing out Janot.

And what about this hard fruit, this stony, sunburnt medlar? . . .

LILULI

Let's pluck that, too. You mustn't neglect anything.

She approaches Janot. The others remain a few paces distant. She calls.

My good man!

He does not turn round.

THE RECRUITING SERGEANTS

Hi, there, Peasant!

Liluli makes a sign to them to be quiet and comes nearer Janot.

LILULI

Good day, my friend.

JANOT, hardly lifting his head.

Morning!

He turns his back on her.

LILULI

What labor! But, good Lord, my friend, you're sweating your life out. Take a little rest. The sun strikes hard, shade is pleasant, days are long, life is short. Don't hoe up the whole plain. Don't sweep the board of all the trouble. You must reserve a little for every day of the week. Have you anything that obliges you to this work? Neither master nor family! The man's a fool who works like a mule. Digging so much, a man digs his own grave. What need have you to be forever turning, scratching, poking, plaguing the earth as you do? She lies yawning, on her back in the sun, swooning with languor. Let them alone. You disturb them. They'll know how to make you fine children, blonde harvests, blue cabbages, frail oats through which the warm winds send the shiver, the ripple of water, the potato's big nose, fleshy and podgy, and, if you like, the golden vine with its chubby grapes from which you shall milk into your vats, under your big feet, old Noah's red milk! I'll vouch for it, you can believe me. Nothing to do but to look on and drink! There now, come along, follow me, Jacky!

She makes as though to go away.

POLICHINELLO

What a snare of a wench! What chatter!

JANOT raising his head for a moment and looking at Lilulì as he leans on his spade.

What are you after, young female?

LILULÌ

I want to help you.

JANOT

Much obliged! You can spread this dung for me, then.

LILULÌ

Pugh! What with?

JANOT

With your fingers, of course. It's the most delicate work.

LILULÌ

My pretty fingers!

POLICHINELLO

Ah! Lilulì! Heh! What did I tell you? Sing your ass fair and he'll gi' you his air.

LILULÌ

But tell me, peasant, haven't you got the pip? Working like a beast with your head bent down and your tongue out; on these sun-scorched lumps of earth, you must raise a fearful thirst. Won't you have a drink?

JANOT

Certainly. This evening.

LILULI

This evening we shall be old, my friend. Who knows if, this evening, we shall still have any wine, or, under our noses, the cellar into which to pour it? Be reasonable, let us profit by the occasion. We shall never drink so young again.

JANOT

Don't worry yourself. I've got the time. When he wants to have a drink, a man has no need of teeth.

LILULI

He's rooted. One word more, Janot. Tell me, do you love your earth?

JANOT

I should think so!

LILULI

I've got a lovely piece of ground for you, up there.

JANOT looking at the sky, stupidly.

Up there?

POLICHINELLO

O, you tall-story-teller, you romancer, what are you going to tell him next? After the vineyards of the Lord, the heavenly kitchen-gardens?

LILULI

Do you see these people going along the road? Striding along, they go on and on. Up there, up there, over and beyond the mountains. Lovely brown

land with clods like butter, thick, crumbling beneath the plowshare, melting beneath the hand, like a breast, prolific as the Old Woman who lived in a Shoe. . . . Heh! what do you say to that, Janot? Would you like some? There it is! Your chops water. Come and take your share of it. Up, my little lad! Aren't you coming?

She makes as though she were going.

JANOT

All right, when I've finished here, I shall go over there.

LILULI

They'll take everything, Janot.

JANOT

But I take my share now, on the spot.

LILULI

A miserable nothing compared with the treasures I offer you! . . . A harvest that will burst the bins and the barns. Fruit that will break down the branches. All you have to do there is to bend down and pick up what falls.

JANOT

Two feet are better than three stilts.

LILULI

The other folks' feet are running.

JANOT

Mine stick fast.

LILULI

So then, you'll let all your neighbors go?

JANOT

If your neighbor is going to drown himself, there's no need for you to go.

LILULI

Oh! Ass! One who gives you a wigging will lose his own wig.—But if Liluli's voice has not the gift of charming you, we may be able to find someone else who will make you march. Do you disdain my eyes? Perhaps hers will be better able to touch you.

POLICHINELLO

Whom are you speaking of?

LILULI

My cousin who has turned sour—Opinion.

POLICHINELLO

Bah! Go along with you!

LILULI

Who laughs last laughs best.

POLICHINELLO

He won't march.

LILULI

He will march.

THE RECRUITING SERGEANTS

He will march.

And so will you, my friend. You won't be then in such high spirits. So, forward! I expect you. Left—Right! Left—Right! "We'll strike 'em right, right in the grub, rub-adub, rub-adub."

Singing these words, she digs Janot in the ribs, threatens Polichinello gayly, and runs off laughing—while the recruiting sergeants take up the refrain, singing with queer jerky gestures.

THE RECRUITING SERGEANTS

We'll strike 'em right, right in the grub, rub-adub, rub-adub, we'll strike 'em right, right in the grub, and make them bleed, bleed much blood. . . .

They go out. While their voices fade in the distance, Polichinello, hanging on to the end of his branch like a monkey, and Janot leaning on his spade, look at one another in perplexity. Polichinello slides down from his branch. Janot leaves his spade planted in the ground, and they go on looking at one another, Polichinello scratching his hump and nose, Janot scratching his head. Then Janot shrugs his shoulders and seizes his spade once more, while Polichinello slaps his thigh and cuts a caper.

POLICHINELLO

Rub-adub. . . . Pooh! we shall see, there's time enough. It will be amusing. . . . Rub-adub!

A crowd is heard approaching, chanting on one, same, even, uninterrupted, monotonous, labored note, separating all the syllables, up to the last two phrases, which are articulated with violence.

THE CROWD laden with little gods.

O-ra-pro-nobis, Saint Sulpitius—St. Evaristus—St. Propitius—St. Sebastian, St. Fridolin—St. Zephirin, St. Benjamin—Pantaleon, Napoleon—St. Dagobert, St. Robespierre—St. Veronica, St. Republica—St. King, St. Kaiser, St. Cannon—St. Holy-Water-Pot, St. Reason, St. Petticoat—great St. Anthony and St. Pig—St. Fortuna and St. Pecunia—St. Grego and St. Ego—St. Silly, St. Heaven, St. Spleen—St. Prunes-and-Prisms, St. Bellyfull—St. Love-me-not-my-neighbor—for you are mine, not his—I didn't take and give you board and washing—lodged you, prayed to you and entertained you—that you should go and help my neighbor.—Give and take; it is written:

Heaven will help you, if you help it—you're with me, so stay here—good saint, good dog, and if any one comes—bite the stranger! O-ra-pro-nobis, come-now, pray! I don't pray to you gratis!

MASTER-GOD dressed as an Arab hawker; over his shoulder he carries pieces of Oriental stuff. Truth, clad as a gipsy, in a parti-colored Harlequin's costume, pushes a little barrow.

Little gods for sale! Who'll buy? Gods for everything and everybody! For the kitchen, for childbirth, for burns and tooth-ache, for a better government, for finding lost objects, recovering stolen purses and virility, for winning law-suits without costs and making other people lose theirs. Gods, little gods, very cheap! Ladies and gentlemen, are any of you without one? It's always wise, in these hard times, to have a good god in one's pocket, in case one may have need of it. Look, gentlemen, we have them to suit all tastes and purses. Ladies, we have them in all the best scents, in the form of sachets to slip between your little breasts; we have them as writing-table ornaments, paper-weights, or else mounted on tie-pins. Look, gentlemen, gods, gods, at reduced prices for families, dollar 'n a quarter a pair, seventy-five each; a thoroughly reliable article. Take it, my lord, I'll let you have it for thirty cents.

POLICHINELLO

Hullo, old monkey-nut seller, you seem to be coining money.

MASTER-GOD modestly.

O, well, one scrapes along.

POLICHINELLO

But do you know that your business might bring you into trouble?

MASTER-GOD

With whom, sir? My position is all correct. I am a man of order, I respect the State—all the States. My principle, sir, is always to be on good terms with those that are strong. Whoever they are, they are fine, they are good, they are . . . strong. When one has said that, one has said everything. They change

sometimes, but I change with them, or even a quarter-of-an-hour before. O! I'm not to be caught. And you'll always find me, always, on the right side.

POLICHINELLO

Ha, ha! In that case, old boy, you're luckier than I am. I generally find myself at the wrong end of the stick.

MASTER-GOD

My son, there must always be people for both ends.

POLICHINELLO

Suppose we change?

MASTER-GOD

No, no. Every man must stay at his post.

POLICHINELLO

To return to what we were talking about: tell me now: I can understand your being on good terms with the mighty ones of the earth, if you pay; that's your affair. Money makes the mare go. But the old Father? How does he regard your actions?

MASTER-GOD

What Father?

POLICHINELLO pointing to the sky.

The Old Fellow up there. Aren't you afraid of his wrath? You're in competition with him, you fetish-monger. [Master-God bursts out laughing.] What are you laughing at? [Master-God has a fit of choking. Polichinello slaps him on the back.] Gently, gently. . . .

MASTER-GOD calming himself, very politely.

Excuse me, sir.

He gets rid of the stuffs that he is carrying on his shoulder by unloading them, without ceremony, yet always with manners of an exquisite politeness, onto the bewildered Polichinello.

Allow me.

POLICHINELLO

But . . .

He stands there, unable to understand, loaded like an ass. Master God, now unburdened, calmly proceeds to take off his Arab hawker's gown, his turban, &c.

But . . . but . . .

Master-God appears with his fine long locks curled and well-brushed, his beard carefully tended, his white dressing-gown with a golden sun embroidered on it in front and a moon behind. He puts the finishing touches to his toilette in front of the mirror which Truth holds up to him. During the process of completing his work, he whispers confidentially in Polichinello's ear, making a screen with his hand.

MASTER-GOD

The Old Fellow up there, sir . . . [He points to himself.] is Me.

POLICHINELLO now incapable of understanding anything.

What?

MASTER-GOD winking his eye.

Master Good God Almighty, sir, at your service!

POLICHINELLO stands gaping at the information.

Ah! Bah!

MASTER-GOD who is not above enjoying a bad pun.

Not *à bas,* sir, but on high. Ay, very high.

POLICHINELLO exhausts himself in prostrations.

Excuse me, your Grace. . . . I treated you familiarly.

MASTER-GOD indulgently.

No offense, my son; I'm used to it.

POLICHINELLO

But this disguise. . . .

MASTER-GOD complacently.

Yes, I was well made up . . . [Pointing to Truth.] She dresses me. Allow me . . . [He introduces them.] My son, Polichinello . . . my—shall we say, my friend, Chiridichiquilla? . . . [To Polichinello, who has not caught the name.] Truth, my son; she with the cry of the swallow.

POLICHINELLO taking off his hat.

Mademoiselle, or Madame, I thought you were—if you'll excuse me—a member of my family, one of the Harlequin girls.

TRUTH

And you were quite right, my gossip. Harlequin is my cousin. Like him, I am dressed in the colors of the rainbow.

POLICHINELLO

The costume suits you; but I should have preferred to see you, as they speak of you, at the side of a well, dressed . . . all undressed.

TRUTH

Hush!

She points at Master-God who has meanwhile been arranging the old clothes in the barrow.

That's reserved for him alone. He's jealous. Once he acted King Condaules's rôle and gnashed his teeth over it. Since then, the jewels have been kept under lock and key. But, cousin, if one really wants to, there are ways. . . . I'll say no more. . . . For want of the key. . . .

POLICHINELLO

There are locksmiths.

TRUTH pointing at Master-God who is drawing near.

Hush!

MASTER-GOD slightly suspicious but paternal.

Well, my children, you seem to have made prompt acquaintance.

POLICHINELLO taking hold of a piece of Truth's dress.

I was admiring this shot material, your Grace.

MASTER-GOD

Yes, it's *gorge-de-pigeon*. I chose it myself. It varies according to the humor of the passers-by. Whoever would like Truth rose-colored or somber or gray, hope-green or blood-red—he is served. I want all the world to be content.

POLICHINELLO

You're not exacting.

MASTER-GOD

One has to live, my child. Times are hard. Prices are going up. The Germans have shown us, in trade, that one must follow people's tastes. A prudent man doesn't offend his clients. The fashion for stuff that won't wear out has passed. They want shoddy. We'll give it them, amen, for their money. In old days God sufficed them, one and alone, eternal. Then I sat throned, invisible, in the smoke of their altars and in the hearts of their prophets. Nowadays they

make a point of seeing, fingering, feeling little gods between their greasy fingers. So be it! I break myself up into small change. Who'll take the Eternal in spelter Saints, monkeys, fetishes, knick-knacks, amulets, greegrees, sacred and profane, medals stamped with the effigies of Republics or Kings, they can take their choice! Who pays, prays. They are petty. Let us be petty. I don't loose my thunderbolts on parsley plants. Since their heart is in their pocket, we shall find a way of installing ourselves there.

THE CROWD taking up its chant once more. Shrill voices.

St. John, St. Gratian—Hyginus, Crispian, Longinus, Lucan—Balbinus, Quentin, Quirinus, St. Bunting—St. Jacobin, St. Parson—Saint Loyola, Saint Panama—Tobacco Shops, Papa's Boy—Odo, Triphonius, Saint Free-Mason—Evolution, Revolution, Tradition—Immaculate Conceptions—Saintess Right, Saint Might, Saint Me—St. Holy Gospel according to our Apostle—St. Pantaloon and St. Buffoon. . . .

From the other side of the ravine another crowd is heard approaching, chanting in another language.

THE OTHER CROWD bass voices.

Ora pro nobis, Sankt Luther—Blücher, Koerner, Schopenhauer—Bebel, Hebbel, Hegel, Haeckel—Sankta Gewalt, Sankt Oswald—Sankt Kant, Sankt Krupp, Krieg und Kultur—Hochwürdige hochachtbar hoch Organization—St. Holy Gospel according to St. Marx and St. Bismarck. . . .

The Hurluberloches debouch on the other side of the ravine immediately opposite the first crowd of Gallipoulets, from whom they are separated by a footbridge. On either side they halt and question one another noisily, teasingly, amicably.

THE TWO CROWDS great din.

Hullo! There are the folks of the other side! Hi, friends! . . . What ugly mugs! Lord, aren't they hideous. . . . Fish-faces! . . . Gallipoulets! . . . Sausage-eaters. Sacks of rotgut! . . . Do get on to

that paunch! . . . Look at that big red one, that pugnose dog! . . . Hide your jowl! . . . Hold on to your guts! they're falling out. . . . A health to the ladies. . . . To you, my heart! . . . Come over here, my darling! . . . Heh, my little plump one, just a good smack on your two apples! . . . Where are you going, you chaps? . . . Up there, up there, comrades! . . . So are we. . . . We're running away from the flood. . . . And so are we all. Well, then, let's go on our way together. . . . Yes, yes, that would be fun! . . . Ooh! but this rockety bridge isn't enough to cross this torrent on. . . . Well, then, you tanks, you stick-in-the-muds, what t'hell, we'll make another

bridge. . . . Come on, woodcutters, lay on! And, carpenters, saw away! . . . We others, while we wait —let's sit down on either bank and let us feast! What do you say? What do you say to that? . . . Eat, let's eat! When it's a matter of stowing away, honest folk will never say nay. . . . What have you got in your baskets? . . . Chitterlings and saveloy. . . . Sausages and black pudding. . . . And pumpkin pie. . . . Cheese o' sheep and brown bread. . . . Garlic to keep the mouth fresh and leeks with their white heads and their green tails—the *vert galants.* And some chestnuts and prunes. . . . And to drink, a nice little white wine that is werry werry fine. And we, we've beer as blond as our blond-maned girls. . . . And we, we've cider that foams and makes the cork go pop. . . . Let's belch, let's bulge, let's guzzle, let's gorge. D'ye like some of mine? Give me some of thine! . . . Here's a loaf for an oaf! Sausage nice, catch a slice! [They toss their victuals one to another across the ravine.] Hi! frog-face, open your trap! . . . Bang, right in a thousand! The drink, that's sacred; the child will bring it to you. . . . Hi! Tom-thumb, take care, don't fall. It's almost as though you were holding the Holy Sacrament. . . . [Children go back and forth from side to side over the narrow foot-bridge, carrying tankards and bottles.] Your health! . . . Hum, it's good! . . . Let's drink, brothers, drink! No more frontiers! The whole world is nothing more than one paunch with a thousand

arms, to barrel up food and drink, and one heart to love everybody.

THE FAT MEN among themselves.

Lord! Do you hear what these beggars are saying? No more frontiers, it's scandalous. . . . Look at them passing round the loving-cup, drinking out of the same jug and lapping out of the same dish. . . . Ugh, ugh! The ideal of these swine would be to impose on every man of them one trough, one hovel, one dung-hill. These sharers are dangerous. I want each man to have his own; give me mine—and the others can have what's left. Good God! Good God! Better and better! And see, they're dancing now, hugging one another. . . . It's scandalous! . . . If they were all united it would be a calamity. . . . The pee-pul wouldn't want to work any more. Zounds, god's blood, then we should have to sweat and work! . . . No more rich, no more poor, no more states, no more nations. It would be, it would be sheer topsy-turvydom! . . . If we let them do as they liked, why, there would be no more war; why, there'd be no more God. It's enough to make one tear one's hair . . . no more anything, no more property! Every one would only think of being happy. It's scandalous! . . . What an insolent pretension! To want to eliminate evil from this earth! Then what would be left for honest folk to rest their heads on? Not a stone. . . . God created evil, pestilence, patriotism, wealth and war. He knew very well why! The earth needs ma-

nuring. Evil, that is the manure. There must be enrichment. There must be common people. There must be beggars. And there must be poverty for plow and hatred for goad, so that they may drive their furrow. . . . Gee, haw! get along! These oxen must be made to go.

But you, gentlemen of the Diplomatic Corps, you prickers of oxen, what the devil are you doing with the goad? We had charged you with the task of watching over our safety, of maintaining the order and injustice consecrated by the past, the abuses, the traditions and the disunion of nations. . . . And that's the way you conduct the pee-pul for us! Oho, gentlemen, that isn't good . . . straight into one another's arms! Is it for this noble result. . . . ha, ha! . . . that you've been paid, gilded and braided before, behind, from top to toe, covered with honor and stars! Now, then, gentlemen of the Diplomatic Corps!

THE DIPLOMATS

Now then, now then, my Fat Sirs! Leave us alone. You don't understand anything about it. For Diplomacy is a mystery. . . . Hush! . . . You, common people! are permitted to adore only, and be silent. All is for the best. Know then that in the Service when we make a mistake, we do it on purpose. If one of us bites the dust, he's only pretending, he's embracing the earth. . . . Back! No admittance to our house; keep quiet! Or else we give a week's no-

tice. . . . Poor numskulls! So you criticize and carp at this picture, do you? [They point to the peoples at the feast.] It's the finest child our genius has ever begotten. Listen now, for we will condescend to explain our sacred inventions to you, dunces! Since it was impossible to prevent these beggars from advancing, and since the city walls, old and worm-eaten, were ready to fall at their thrusting, we, smart chaps, have pretended to approve. But the exodus won't go far. We direct it; and before long you'll see these cudgeled asses going back, chop-fallen, to their mangers.

THE FAT MEN

And who'll be the donkey driver?

THE DIPLOMATS

Why, Diplomacy. Thanks to our genius the emigrant peoples, instead of each taking a different road, have been guided all toward the single point where all the roads join.

THE FAT MEN

Why? In order that they may unite?

THE DIPLOMATS

O men of little faith! Why? In order that they may belabor one another.

THE FAT MEN

What?

THE DIPLOMATS

It's a game. Leave us to act with our partners, the gentlemen of the Service on the other side.

THE FAT MEN

Are you in agreement, then?

THE DIPLOMATS

According to the rules, one must be: we have our game. Diplomacy is a game of chess. The rules demand that, to win, one must lose pawns. The pawns are there [pointing to the peoples] ; we have only to put them on the chess-board.

CHORUS

O fair Diplomacy, thou angel sent from heaven to temper the wearisomeness of life, to rid us of irksome peace, of happiness and love, which are things all too vulgar; thou dost undo the work of nature (for nature is good for beasts) ; thou makest enemies of those who are united; and those who cannot bear with one another thou knittest together. None so well as thou knows the art of finding in a hayloft the solitary needle. If it be not there, thou puttest it there: thus Joseph slipping a cup into Benjamin's wallet. We owe it to thy conjuring tricks in the manner of Robert Houdin that, on rising each morning, we never know what thou wilt have done with us by evening. Through thee we are acquainted with war and its delights—ravished wife, ravaged fields, my skin punctured (ow! ow!), but then I puncture other people's—the exquisite joys of envy (how sweet it is to get the jaundice through coveting one's neighbor's goods! We shall take him and destroy him;

taking is very good; destroying is better; destroying is a feast for the gods.) . . . With thy wondrous fingers thou knowest how to tangle the thread as thou windest it, to make knots in the skein. Clever must be he who shall undo them! No one has the right to nose out the secrets of the green table. Thou playest with us, our money, our goods, our skins, our souls and our children, and none may penetrate thy game. . . . It's stunning! . . . And when, afterwards, I am beaten, pounded, fleeced and thoroughly contented, thou presentest me with a lovely treaty, covered with signed initials, and the bill, to be paid cash down. And we pay, and we say: "Thank you, thank you! Till next time." When one's the oyster, one must be swallowed, mustn't one? And I am, and I shall be. It makes me gape with pleasure and pride. . . . O lovely Diplomacy, what would life be without thee? A wine without dregs. A pleasure without envy. A summer day without rain. . . . A most insipid contentment.

POLICHINELLO

And what are they doing, those scarabs over there, those gold-braided fellows, whispering, plotting together? One would say a lot of big dung-beetles assembled round a cow-pat.

MASTER-GOD

They are beckoning to me. . . . I must go and give a helping hand to my dear sons. For it is said: "Help

yourself and heaven will help you." . . . [To those about him.] Excuse me. . . . I have been sent for. . . . [to Truth, who is preparing to follow him.] No, stay here. We have no need of you for the moment. When everything is finished you shall be told. [To Polichinello.] My son, I entrust her to you. . . . And don't abuse your trust. . . . I'll be back and take her again. . . . He goes off, humming, with little hurrying steps, then turns back. Above all, respect her, Polichinello!

POLICHINELLO puts a finger to the corner of his eye.

Like the apple of my eye.

TRUTH who has kept a watch on the departure of Master-God.

The old man's gone? . . . [throwing her arms round Polichinello's neck.] Houp-la! Carry me off with you! . . .

POLICHINELLO

What? What!

TRUTH

Carry me off! . . . Presto, presto! One, two, three and away!

POLICHINELLO

O no, indeed. . . . Ah, what a mess! . . . The old man will be furious.

TRUTH stamping her foot.

I've had enough of them, I've had enough of all these old men, these kings, these priests, these ministers, these fat *bourgeois*, these diplomats, these

deputies, these journalists, all these puppets, preachers, pot-bellies, these gods and dodderers! I've had enough, enough of slaving! I've had enough, enough of lying! . . . I want to live, sing, dance; I want to run and laugh. . . . My cousin, my ugly cousin, humped and crooked if you will, but free and merry, I like you better. Save me from them! They'll come and shut me up, they'll come and cloister me, muzzle me, gird me with a belt of chastity. . . . Take me away with you! We'll go through the world laughing, telling folk the truth, tweaking their noses, opening their closed eyes, unprisoning the immured, unswathing the bound, sending a spark of light into

brains besmoked, breaking temples and thrones, and making the laughter of the starry sky shine through the torn darkness. . . .

POLICHINELLO

Very fine, very fine; you'll get me into terrible trouble, dear coz. Very soon we'd find ourselves sleeping in the lock-up.

TRUTH

And a fine thing, too, my Poli. We should be two in the same bed. Poli, Polet, my little Poulet, Polichinello, they may hang you or quarter you, I shall always be true to thee. Let's love one another—what matters anything else?

POLICHINELLO

Ah! but excuse me, it matters a great deal to me.

TRUTH

But we shall be two, I tell you! I'm ready to go to the stake with you.

POLICHINELLO

The stake! Ods' hump! No doubt it's very fine to be two on that scaffold, but—it gives me the cold shivers—I prefer to be alone in some cooler spot.

TRUTH

Ugh, you coward! you rabbit! You chicken-hearted poltroon! You're always the same, you're afraid of the stick. You can laugh and make fun, but be-

hind your hand, like a schoolboy. Like your great fathers, the great Polichinellos, the masters of free irony and laughter, like Erasmus and Voltaire, you are prudent, prudent; your big mouth closes down on your snigger. . . . Fine fellows to look at, my lovers! So long as they save their wit and their galligaskins, they don't care a snap about those of other folks. My love for them makes them free, but me they leave captive. . . . Ah! you don't love me, you don't know how to love Truth; you only love yourselves, you wouldn't risk a hair to deliver me. . . . Laughter, thou'rt a fox: no, thou'rt not the lion. . . . Laugh away, then, laughers! This shall be your punishment; you shall always know how to mock at falsehood when you catch it in your nets, but never, never will you catch Truth. Since you are afraid to be seen with her, I shall never be your faithful comrade, holding your hand by day and at night leaning watchfully over your sleep. You shall be alone, you laughers, alone with your laughter, under the vault of the void. And you will call to me then. And I shall answer no more, I shall be gagged. . . . Ah! When will the lover come, the great all-conquering Laugh, who shall rouse me once more to life with the sound of his roaring?

MASTER-GOD from the distance.

Hi! Truth, it's time. Come and dress.

Truth wraps herself sullenly in her gipsy mantle.

TRUTH to Polichinello.

Never more shall you hear me.

She darts away.

POLICHINELLO

Good riddance! . . . Cousin Truth is charming, certainly, quite charming. . . . But what a temperament! Ouf! Can you see me with this volcano in my bed? I was always told that Truth was a modest person, good-looking, well brought up, prudish and narrow-minded. . . . Well, after that, believe, if you can, in wedding announcements! A nanny goat gone mad. . . . The devil! she's all fire! One has only to touch her, and one begins to roast! . . . Just go for a walk with that madcap on your arm! Everyone would be pointing at you. . . . It's a fine thing, Truth is. . . . But between ourselves, gentlemen, a pretty little lie is much nicer to fondle. Gentlemen, let us go on lying and tousling. What's that? [He comes to a stop before an object which a passing girl has picked up; he snatches it from her.] Let go, will you! A pomegranate flower let fall from her dark locks by the mad creature in her restlessness. It smells of the perfumed sweat of her mane. . . . I quaff it, bite it, chew it, like an ass. . . . 'Sblood! I was a coward! . . .

THE WORKMEN on one side of the ravine sing while they labor. Lively, jerky air.

O-ho, Joseph, come tell us,
O-ho, Joseph, come tell us:

Were you not jealous
At the curving waist-line
Of that princess divine?
O-ho, Joseph, come tell us
O-ho, Joseph. . . .

THE WORKMEN on the other side of the ravine sing while they labor. Slow air.

Down beyant the orchard there's a green, green grove . . .
Nightingale's a-singing day by day . . .
Talking pretty talk and says regardin' love:
"Lovers they be woeful ones for aye."

THE TWO GANGS OF WORKMEN together.

Down beyant the orchard there's a green, green grove . . .
O-ho, Joseph, come and tell us . . .
Nightingale's a-singing day by day . . .
Cuckoo, cuckoo! Cuckoo, cuckoo!

THE GRAND DERVISH to Master-God.

The jackanapes! Daring to sully Your Lordship with their stupid jocularity!

MASTER-GOD indulgently.

Enough, my son; I am in good company. They inflict on me a common hardship. It's only to make me their fellowman. If it would give them pleasure that one should wear horns we will mount them: the bull-god Apis certainly wore them!

THE WORKMEN coming back from either side with the planks of the bridge which they proceed to lay down; singing.

Down beyant the orchard, there's a green, green grove . . .
Ho there! Cuckoo! Hi there! Cuckoo!

[Talking.] There we are. We haven't spared elbow grease. It's as handsome, bright and smooth as a polished floor. A wedding party could dance on it. . . . Hi! you dawdlers! Are you ready? And you, too, Jack Lazy Bones, come and give a hand.

THE DIPLOMATS on either side of the ravine.

Stop, you wretches! . . . Here! Halt, gentlemen! Heavens, what are you thinking of? . . . Lord love us, what do you mean to do?

THE WORKMEN

What are we doing, pudding head? Have you lost your eyes? [To a man in a monocle.] Put a second window-pane in; perhaps you'll see better. . . . What a calf the man must be who doesn't see what we're doing. [Singing.] Hey ho! Sing cuckoo! Hey ho! that we're making a bridge.

THE DIPLOMATS lifting up their hands in horror.

A bridge? . . . A bridge! . . . They're making a bridge! . . . a bridge!

THE WORKMEN laughing at them.

"London Bridge is broken down." "Dance over, my Lady Lee."

THE DIPLOMATS

Great God! and what are you making a bridge for?

THE WORKMEN

To get across, old boy. "London Bridge is broken down"—us and our Mr. Grunter.

They dig them in the stomach, imitating the grunting of a pig.

THE DIPLOMATS

By what right? In whose name? Did you ask for authorization?

THE WORKMEN

To do what? To dance round the mulberry bush, eh? And whose authorization? I authorize myself. If I want to let fly I let fly.

THE DIPLOMATS very starchy-necked.

Without a permit? That's an offense! Forbear! In a State that is well ordered whatever is not permitted is interdict. You must have papers for everything, signed, stamped and initialed. If it were not for official documents, there would be no distinction between man and the beasts. Let us then officially-documentarize. As for the said bridge, have the forms and usages been observed, the laws, the Constitution and the regulations of the Administration?

THE WORKMEN

Usages be blowed! And as for forms, we'll just sit on them.

He sits on the top hat of one of the diplomats.

THE OTHER WORKMEN

No, no, not that, Colas! There must be forms. He's right. One can't live, eat, sleep, marry, dance and die like a pig. There must be forms; it's forms that make you proud of being a man.

THE DIPLOMATS

Our first care, therefore, when the bridge is made, must be to . . . prevent anyone crossing it, to put up a turnstile. Two sentinels at the two ends. Customs House officers. Notice: fines, prohibitions, contravention, declaration, duties and excise. . . . Look, look, that's all much better. . . . How a mere nothing proves enough, if it's arranged with taste! The picture looks much less woolly already. Let us add four doctors to vaccinate and inoculate all who cross with cholera, influenza, plague, mange, grippe, ring-worm, syphilis, hydrophobia, scab, et cetera. . . . Furthermore, fourteen delegates from the Censor's office to check, chop, unstick, disinfect and spy on all written matter; they are the doctors of the soul. . . . That's not all; we must next make sure that the construction is strong enough to bear . . . what it has to bear.

THE WORKMEN

Strong enough? Our bridge? You could go across, three men, four women and five geese abreast.

THE DIPLOMATS

Men! It isn't a question of men. The question with a proper bridge is, *in primis:* that cannons can pass over it!

THE WORKMEN

Cannons? Why? To shoot partridges, or wild boars, or what?

THE DIPLOMATS peremptorily.

No reason. Just to try.

THE FAT MEN with authority.

It's always done.

THE THIN MEN resignedly.

Then it must be done, I suppose.

THE DIPLOMATS

That isn't all. Before traffic can be authorized to pass, there must be pronounced, in the name of the state, of the nation, the law cats and the brass hats of the Church, the lumpkins, the pumpkins and the Royal Academy bumpkins, certain palavers or discourses.

THE WORKMEN

What for? For the heavy weight test?

THE DIPLOMATS peremptorily.

What for? Why, to talk. That is man's greatness. Talking in order to say nothing. Saying something in order to do nothing—to prevent anything from being done.

THE FAT MEN with authority.

Let us be noble. And you fellows, get busy, raise for us a platform!

THE THIN MEN resignedly.

Let's build them a perch, then—a driveling-place to chatter from.

They erect a rostrum at the entry of the bridge.

A WORKMAN

I'm quite happy they should chatter, but as for listening to them, no! I'm in a hurry, I have my business, I want to cross.

THE DIPLOMATS

Back! No one may cross a bridge before the inauguration.

THE WORKMEN

Will it take long?

THE DIPLOMATS

It will take as long as is proper.

THE THIN MEN resignedly.

O, well, everything must end by coming to an end.

POLONIUS mounts the rostrum.

Dear fellow citizens, brothers of both banks, of this bank and the other and of yet a third (I don't know if there is one; but it doesn't matter. . . .) All men are but a single body. Men and women . . . [A guffaw.] In all modesty, all honor, I speak. I come here to give my blessing to this future union. The future is not to-morrow. By no means, no, understand me well. That is what makes it so charming, so unexacting, so little troublesome. A good subject for toasts and after-dinner speeches. I know all about it. I am a delegate of the Peace Congress. . . . [He introduces himself.] Polonius, Modeste-Napoleon. Napoleon is my Christian name. Modeste was add-

ed so as not to frighten people; I am a simple, kindly man. You see my ribbons, my decorations. [He shows them.]

There's the order of Kamschatka now, with the Kattegat; here is the Karatschi and the Gaurisanka. [He turns round and shows his back.] I have more there. [He turns back again, satisfied.] I speak in all honor, all modesty. It commits one to nothing. Well, then, my friends, my brothers—my brothers of to-morrow, or

rather of the day after to-morrow—I have come to pay my tribute to this bridge, this bridge, this prodigious bridge, this bridge so long and pompous . . .

ALL HANDS

Abridge, abridge! . . .

POLONIUS

This bridge of love and alliance which stretches through the air like a rainbow in the firmament. Touching symbol of the great day that is to come (it will come! it will come! . . . but don't let us be in any hurry!) when States shall disarm, when the walls shall crumble, the walls of those prisons—those nations—when peoples shall fall into one another's arms, when the ravening wolf and the gentle lamb shall crop the grass of the meadow side by side, casting sweet eyes at one another, when the workers shall have a long snooze every morning, when the rich shall share their beds and their cellars with the workmen, when arms, armies and treaties shall be put away in the museum, and to the museum the concession-mongers, governors and contractors—when hens shall have teeth. . . . The day will come, will come, indeed it will! But we haven't got there yet. Advance must come step by step. We make no rash pretensions that we're going to deprive you, before the hour has struck, of war, poverty, business and land sharks. The birch is a necessary evil for children. Young folks must pass. Let us pass it by, scratching ourselves in the process.

THE ASS rolling on the ground.

Hee-haw! Hee-haw!

POLONIUS

The point, then, my good friends, in these happy days in which we live is to choose, like the rabbit, with what sauce you wish your giblets stewed. Do you prefer being slaughtered above ground, under ground, in the air or in the water? (For my part, I don't like water; good wine is more in my line.) Do you long to get in the belly a round bullet or a pointed one, brown or plated, shrapnel, shell-splinter, crump or bomb, or rather the good cold steel, which is clean and pleasant? Which would you like best, to be disemboweled, broiled, punctured, squashed, boiled, roasted, or—the last fashion—electrocuted? We will deny you nothing. We only draw the line, for your own good, at the barbarous, the common—at submarines and stinking gases; in a word, badly-bred death and uncivilized war. But you'll lose nothing by that. We police war. Let us polish it, gentlemen, and repolish it! What should we be without war? It is through war that peace has its price. And it is by means of war that we are building up *in saecula per pocula* the Society of Nations. For everything hangs together; follow me carefully. Without nations, there could be no Society of Nations. And no nation, no war! No war, no nation! Well, then, all is very well and will be much better. Count on us! Give us a

free hand. We know so well how to mix black and white, right and might, peace and war, concocting war-like peaces and peace-bringing wars; we shall embellish nature for you so skillfully that you won't be able to recognize her at all.

THE CROWD

Bravo! Very fine, Old Polo, Napo! Old Skin! What gibble-gabble! His gullet's as swollen with words as a bagpipe.

Polonius tries to go on, but his voice is drowned by the noise of the crowd and the rumble of passing wheels.

POLICHINELLO

What a row! One can't hear oneself speak! . . . What are they dragging?

THE FAT MEN

The cannons. Come, get down, Polonius! You've barked enough for to-day! Now it's time to dance.

In fact, during the last part of Polonius's speech, a number of cannon, garlanded, beribboned or covered with foliage, have been trundled up from either side of the ravine.

THE PEDDLERS

Arbalistas, stone-throwers, sugar-handbake, steel plums, indiarubber balls, oranges and grenades, dynamite, barley syrup. . . .

A VOICE from the other side of the ravine.

Hullo there!

THE PEDDLERS

Here we are, sir, here!

On a double cord thrown across the ravine they send over, by means of an arrangement of pulleys, bales and barrels in exchange for cash.

POLICHINELLO

I thought there was to be no more crossing.

THE FAT MEN

Only for people, sir. Money always crosses. Money needs no bridge. Mercury has always had wings on his heels. [To the workmen, pointing to the people on the other bank.] Look, gentlemen, look over there; it's ap-

palling. They're armed to the teeth. Cannons and catapults, muzzles pointing, ready to spit, their powder dry and their cord oiled. Halberds, muskets, a forest of surging arms. My flesh creeps, creeps at the sight. Prepare! It's against us.

THE WORKMEN

No it isn't, old fool. They're playing. We're doing just the same.

THE FAT MEN

They're doing much more. Count, count! Ah! the brigands! They have seventy-one rifles, while we have only threescore and ten.

THE WORKMEN

But we have twenty-seven catapults against their twenty-six.

THE FAT MEN

Silence! Stop him! . . . The wretch! He is betraying the secrets of the defense.

THE WORKMEN

Defense against whom? We're all good comrades.

THE FAT MEN

O, impious, impious! Abject creatures, can you be so far degraded that you don't know how to hate your enemies?

THE WORKMEN

Faith, no! I neither love nor hate you.

THE FAT MEN

Men without a country! Can't you read? It is written: "Your enemies are the robbers who don't belong here."

THE WORKMEN

And what about the robbers here?

THE FAT MEN

The game is preserved here. I have a license to shoot.

THE WORKMEN

I don't see the difference if I'm fleeced here or there.

THE FAT MEN

There's a very great difference.

THE WORKMEN

Yes, certainly for you.

THE FAT MEN

Would you rather be fleeced here and there also? Listen a bit: isn't it better that we should rob you in a friendly way, all in the family, leaving you for decency's sake the breeches to your back? Rather than to see them adorning an alien's behind? Understand, my lad: that you should be plucked, that is good, very good, and we have no fault to find; it's the law of nature, the Law. But the law doesn't demand that a goose should be plucked twice. Why the devil do you want to be? Upon my word I speak as your good friend; I am standing up for your rights. Don't

you find it hard enough, as it is, to live here? Are you mad? What giddy folly has seized you that you want to invite competitors into your fields? They will take everything. We're already beginning to suffocate among ourselves; why, it's almost impossible to stir on the road. If other people come, nobody will be able to walk at all.

THE THIN MEN

What he says is very true. We're not fat, but we're already packed as tight as sardines in a tin. Where shall we put these whales?

THE WORKMEN

The world is a large place. What a yarn! There is no lack of roads. If need be, we'll cut some more.

THE FAT MEN

No, no, there is only one, and that's ours. It's the only good one, the only one that leads straight. The first at the goal will be king; he'll be able to take everything and the rest can tighten their belts. Much you'll be able, with those beasts, to dispute the bone they will have seized!

THE THIN MEN

Greedy brutes! What an appetite! They do nothing but gorge and guzzle. They eat into everything. They're like caterpillars. The devil! if they get across they'll gobble us down alive. . . . Ooh! what are they doing? They're coming! . . . The

enemy! Stop. . . . Save yourselves! . . . To arms! . . . Barricade the bridge! . . . Shut the gates! . . . Bring up the cannons!

THE HURLUBERLOCHES from the other side.

Hi, there! What do they want? They mean to invade us! To arms! Fall on them!

THE FAT MEN

See now! What did I tell you? They meant to take us by surprise.

THE THIN GALLIPOULETS

Swine!

THE THIN HURLUBERLOCHES

Toads!

THE THIN GALLIPOULETS

Lubbers!

THE THIN HURLUBERLOCHES

Stink-pots!

CERTAIN WORKMEN

You're all idiots. To begin with, explain what it's all about.

THE FAT MEN

No explanations. They mobilized before we did.

THE WORKMEN to their fellows on the other side.

Comrades, let us disarm.

THE THIN GALLIPOULETS

Put down your arms, murderer!

THE THIN HURLUBERLOCHES

Put them down yourself, ruffian!

THE THIN GALLIPOULETS

You first!

THE THIN HURLUBERLOCHES

First you!

ALL

Not such fools as all that!

POLICHINELLO, laughing.

The idiots!

THE FAT MEN

The rogues were only waiting for us to disarm to fall upon us.

THE THIN GALLIPOULETS

You stupids! Your trick is stitched with white thread; one can see it twenty yards away. Ah, skunks! . . .

THE THIN HURLUBERLOCHES

Don't come near!

THE THIN GALLIPOULETS

Back with you!

THE THIN HURLUBERLOCHES

I'll chew your nose off!

THE THIN GALLIPOULETS

I'll stick you in the gizzard!

MASTER-GOD his voice is audible in the midst of the crowd before he can be seen.

Wait! My presence is the only thing wanting at your festival. Where the cannons are, there am I. Present arms! Open your ranks! . . . Excuse me, my children, excuse me; it's me, it's God. Let me pass.

He makes his way through the crowd, which falls back to let him pass.

THE CROWD OF GALLIPOULETS

It is God! God has come! God is among us! God is for us! God is ours!

The crowd has fallen into line and Master-God is seen advancing, wearing Gallipoulet uniform, epaulettes, gold braid and all, over his white robe—which makes him look like a sapper. Behind him, carried on a throne in the midst of the Dervishes and the Very-Fat, is Truth. She almost disappears under the heavy, stiff, gold-embroidered chasuble that hides her arms; her head droops under the weight of a massive tiara; a bright metallic veil covers her nose, mouth and chin as though she were an Arab woman: her eyes alone are free. With every appearance of veneration, the Very-Fat uphold the train of her long Byzantine mantle and the gold and silver cords attached to it. She is closely escorted by a bodyguard, bussolanti, journalists and diplomats, who allow no one to come near, and keep off the gapers.

MASTER-GOD

Yes, my friends, I am yours, wholly at your service, myself, my relations, my servants and my lady [He bows his head.]—the lady Truth, your queen and servant. Since one is your God, it is our duty to obey you. And, God's truth, I love you; one is very comfortable staying in your house; the food is good; therefore your cause could not be bad. You laugh at me sometimes, I admit; but I can laugh too, and I can appreciate the worth of a good joke. Laugh away, my sons; you'll pay for it later all the more; in the end you're as meek as sheep. I love you, we love one another, we're as thick as thieves. Therefore, since the time has come to take, let us take. But first a little idealism! The booty will seem the more valuable for that. Attention, please; for I am beginning. . . . Your possessions, my friends, are sacred; so

will other people's be when they become yours, for you have Truth on your side (you can see her: she's veiled so as not to spoil her complexion); and along with her you have Right, Might, Liberty, Authority, Money and the Virtues (who, prudent girls, never marry a beggar), Capital and the Ideal, the Spirit that flies, hands that filch—in a word, the monopoly of Civilization. Everything about you is holy, holy, and you are holy little saints yourselves. Consequently anyone who attacks you is accursed and you may suppress him: 'tis an act of piety. Now it is obvious that you are being attacked: Truth has the proofs in a sealed envelope: but we mayn't show them you: it's a secret. Besides, it would really be undignified to discuss them: you are in the right; you have all the trumps in your hand; so you ought to be attacked. And attacked you are. Attack away, then; you will only be doing so to defend yourselves. What say I, yourselves alone? You will be defending Justice, the Virtues and myself, by God! whom you represent—I am not being modest—far better than We could ever do. On then, courage, kill, kill! For that is war. It is quite true that in my books it is written: "*Thou* shalt not kill. Love thy neighbor." But the enemy is not your neighbor. And defending oneself isn't killing. It's only a matter of coming to a proper understanding of the question. My servants are here to set your hearts at rest. Cheerily, cheerily! my sons, come on; let's fight!

ONE OF THE THIN MEN

But, my Lord, here's Truth. Why does Truth not speak?

MASTER-GOD

She's afraid of the air, my dear child. Her throat is delicate and she has toothache. But if you care to ask one of these gentlemen carrying her, the journalists of the escort, they know her from top to toe; they have viewed her between a pair of sheets.

Truth suddenly stands upright on her platform. By a violent effort she has succeeded in throwing off her cope which falls back on the back of the throne. She appears, her brown body half naked, her arms behind her back, hands and feet bound. The veil covering the lower part of her face falls; the dramatic gipsy face appears, a gag over the mouth. Standing there motionless, she gives the impression of a wild force struggling against its bonds. Confusion among the escort.

MASTER-GOD precipitately.

Quick! hide it! hide! [To the people.] My sons, you must not look. Lower your eyes! Anyone who sees Truth naked will become a cuckold if a man, and if a girl will be struck dumb. Look out for yourselves! Half-right—Turn!

All turn half-right at the word of command. They turn their backs on Truth, or hide their faces in their hands. Naturally, here and there, there are a few girls and peeping Toms who look between their fingers. The throne is lowered to the ground and the bussolanti, laying heavy hands on Truth's bare brown shoulders, force her to sit down again.

MASTER-GOD drawing near, in a whisper.

Shameless hussy! [To the bussolanti.] Trice her up better this time! [To Truth.] What, aren't you content with your gilded chains?

Truth is tied fast—ever so respectfully, of course—to the back of her seat. The chasuble is ceremoniously replaced on her shoulders. After which the bussolanti, journalists, etc., take three steps to the rear, make several genuflexions and a deep bow before the idol and finally take their places once more around the now uplifted throne. Throughout this scene, silence. The crowd is motionless and as though petrified.

MASTER-GOD

Look out for yourselves! . . . Now, my children, you may look.

The whole crowd turns round.

THE CROWD transported with joy, waving hats, handkerchiefs, palms and umbrellas.

Long live Truth!

The procession solemnly marches on. Polichinello, whose existence has been forgotten by everyone, has perched himself on a pointed rock, from which he has been surveying the whole scene in silence, but not without grimaces and contortions. Suddenly he bursts into a peal of laughter, frantic, shrill, infectious, that pierces the noise of the crowd. All looks turn in his direction. And little by little, without understanding why, the whole crowd begins to laugh as he does, a Homeric laugh, that drowns everything else. . . .

MASTER-GOD vexed, shaking his fist at Polichinello.

You scrubby fellow! . . . He makes me lose all my effects. [He checks himself and blesses him.] My son, blessed, blessed. . . .

The procession passes in a storm of singing and shouting.

POLICHINELLO to Truth.

Be at rest, cousin, my poor muzzled cousin! I can hear your cry behind the gag, beneath the veil I can see your teeth biting the torn gag. They tie you up, but they have to take you along. They are afraid of their prisoner, and your silence speaks louder than

their big words. Laugh, cousin. Let us laugh! We shall get the better of them!

The procession moves towards the bridge.

THE CROWD

Where are you off to? . . . They're going! . . . Stop! . . .

MASTER-GOD

Let us pass, please.

POLICHINELLO

"O never leave me, O don't deceive me!"

MASTER-GOD

Don't be disturbed. My sons, my very dear sons, it is my duty, as your God, to be the first to pass the bridge. They need a good sermon. I'm going to give these sons of darkness a thorough dressing down. I shall crush them beneath the light of Truth and Right, and let fly at their ant-hill with the jet of my thunder-bolts. Open your ranks! It will only take a moment.

Part of the procession advances on to the bridge. The other part—journalists, diplomats—remains at the entrance.

THE HURLUBERLOCHIAN SENTRIES

No crossing. *Wer da?*

MASTER-GOD

Der Herr Gott. Here's my passport.

THE SENTRIES

Der Alte Gott! . . . The passport is quite in order. Make way for our old God.

MASTER-GOD

Holla! My lord chamberlain!

POLICHINELLO from his coign of vantage.

What is he doing? He's undressing again.

With the assistance of his chamberlain Master-God nimbly takes off his Gallipoulet uniform; he appears dressed in another uniform with a pointed turban on his head. Toward him advances an escort of high and mighty Hurluberlochian lords in turbans of the same style.

THE SENTRIES announcing them.

His Majesty the Grand Khan—Khan Willy Khan—the Khan of Khans!

Master-God goes to meet the Grand Khan of the Hurluberloches. They embrace.

MASTER-GOD AND THE GRAND KHAN

My son. . . . My brother. . . . My uncle. . . . My cousin. . . . My comrade.

After much exchange of salutations they swap turbans and embrace again, laughing. Master-God then leads the Grand Khan to the feet of Truth where she sits chained on her throne, which has been set down on the ground and is surrounded by a new band of bearers. The Grand Khan makes a low bow before her, then, turning toward Master-God, speaks to him in a whisper, pointing to his eyes, to the sky and toward Truth. Master-God moves his chin in assent, without desisting from smiling

in his own majestic and genial manner: then addresses Truth's new escort.

MASTER-GOD

Yes, the light is strong. . . . Blindfold her. It's healthier for the eyes.

Truth's eyes are blindfolded, and for greater security her head is covered with another thick, black veil. In this guise she looks like a condemned prisoner being led to the scaffold. This done, the two Lords go off side by side, followed by Truth on her throne and by her escort, the whole troop surrounded by Hurluberlochian soldiers in turbans, marching as though on parade. Music ditto.

THE CROWD OF GALLIPOULETS in consternation at the fact of Master-God's disappearance.

He's going!

THE GRAND DERVISH

Not a bit of it! Don't cry! He's present everywhere. He's here and there.

THE GALLIPOULETS in despair.

He has gone, gone! My eyes have seen it, seen it.

THE GRAND DERVISH scornfully.

Seen it! A good proof that should be! . . . My children, you should never believe in what you see.

THE GALLIPOULETS

What should one believe in, then?

THE GRAND DERVISH

In the Voice! Listen! The Voice is still with us.

MASTER-GOD'S VOICE in a gramophone.

"Children, I am here. Honor your dervishe "

THE GALLIPOULETS

A miracle! [They prostrate themselves.]

ONE OF THE THIN MEN

But why has he gone over to the enemy?

THE GRAND DERVISH

To show you the way. Run, fly after him!

The peoples, in their state of over-excitement, throng round either end of the bridge, co-

piously abusing one another, but each remaining prudently at the entry, hesitating to advance.

THE GRAND DERVISH turning toward the Fat-of-Fats, the Diplomats, the Journalists, etc.

To your posts, gentlemen! The time has come for singing. Poets, philosophers, dry-as-dusts, pedants, penny-a-liners and literary men, lords of the inkhorn, you whose blood bears a flood of generous ink, come now, complete the chorus! Let there be no one heard but you. Fly on your best goose quills, fly to the rescue of Right! Holy guardians of the capitol, blow, blow your clarion notes! Be Brutuses, be Catos! Immolate all for the Fatherland—all except your lives, for you must be left to sing of those you kill. All honor to those magnificent voices of yours that crucify and resurrect, that make corpses and heroes! . . . In the baser ranks let us put the counter-basses: theologians, metaphysicians—my 18-inch howitzers, who crash upon the barbarians, the Jack Johnsons of the absolute and the aerial torpedoes of the ideal! . . . Above them come the baritones—the historians, the jurists, all the skillful camouflagers of the Law and the Past. Let us also have a few ministers, economists and the big industrial journalists to send up the munition shares. A few Secretaries of State: they sing out of tune; but the croak of a bird with fine feathers sounds always sweet. . . . And now my

contraltos and tenors—the writers of every sex or of —no sex (they will be the sopranos): the Amazons of the pen who, like their grandmother Venus, burn for Mars; and the despised poets who, in their effort to regain lost love and lost laurels, are all dressed up as warriors. . . . Ah! how handsome they are, my military men, quinquagenarians, tight-laced, be-medaled, marking time! . . . Left, right; left, right! Keep in step! They're regular thunderbolts—on parade. What will they be like in a battle? But fortunately—I breathe again—they don't fight. They are the guards, and, wisely, they remember that the guard's first duty is to guard itself. All honor to the men of duty! . . . Finally, on top, at their posts among the timbrels and cymbals, we shall place the fanatics, the mystics, the Mad Mullahs of journalism; they can be delirious to order, can bark away for so much the yelp, and with their howling rouse the old instinct in the sleeping crowd, the lust of blood. . . . As soloists, one Socialist and one Catholic shall sing a duet to celebrate the virtues according to the Church and the Councils. They are not of the same brew. But what matters the wine, so long as it has no water in it! And what matters the vintage so long as men believe and drink?

POLONIUS

And what about us? What about us? We've been forgotten.

Patience, my bellipacifists! In the amphitheater a seat of honor is reserved for Polonius!

While the Intellectuals tune their instruments and their vocal cords, not without consequential airs and much noise, the troops are massing at the entrance of the bridge. Illusion appears.

LILULI bending over the sleeping Altaïr.

Altaïr, my sweetheart! Come now, sleepy head!

ALTAÏR wakes up.

Lilulì!

LILULI

Pretty one, the time has come.

ALTAÏR

How good it is on this bed! What marvelous dreams! Your arms embraced me, your hair enveloped me, I held you between my knees, and we floated intertwined, like two seaplants twined together and trembling in the undertow. The current swept me away with you, my beloved—away toward what new happiness?

LILULI

Toward a greater, a lovelier happiness. My love, to-day you will prove whether you really know how to love me. The lover who has received all still possesses nothing. Always the best thing in love is what one gives. He who gives not himself completely remains at the beloved's door. He who gives all passes

into the heart of Liluli: it is the nest. Will you? Will you? Will you give me everything?

ALTAÏR

I will, I will. . . . But I have nothing to give.

LILULI

Give it! It is just that nothing that I want. Your life. Will you give it to me, say? Will you suffer for me, say? Say, will you die?

ALTAÏR

Yes, yes, suffer, die. . . . O deliciousness, I would that my blood might flow like wine from the crushed grape to quench your thirst.

LILULI

Come then, for I am thirsty for you. It will be splendid. . . . Look! . . . Humanity is climbing toward the light. Golden sunlight bathes the peaks. To-morrow, your people will reach them. And there stands that enemy race, daring to bar your road, trying, in its envy, to make you redescend the dreary road of night, longing to wrest from you Liluli. Defend me! Defend the light!

ALTAÏR seizes Liluli in his arms and lifts her up.

Ah! I will carry you in my hands up to the heights. And though the whole world should try to prevent me, I shall pass with your dear golden arms round my neck.

POLICHINELLO

Take care! That's a bad way of keeping an eye on the stones in the road! Walking with a girl hanging round one's neck! beware, my simpleton! it means you don't see farther than the end of your nose. . . .

LILULI

You'll never see so far. Near my nose lies my mouth and my kiss.

POLICHINELLO

I lodge elsewhere. It costs too much.

LILULI

It only costs a life. Keep your own, you thief!

POLICHINELLO

The grapes are too green.

ALTAÏR

Make room for me, brothers. I am going to open up your road.

He steps onto the bridge.

THE CROWD

Take care you don't fall!

ALTAÏR

I'm not afraid. I am sure of foot.

He stops suddenly with an exclamation of surprise.

LILULI

What is it, my love? What's the matter? Why do you stop?

ALTAÏR

Wait! What do I see? There. . . . O, dear God! it is he! My friend, my brother. . . . Antarès!

ANTARÈS, from the other side.

Altaïr!

THE CROWD

You'll fall! Take care!

Altaïr sets Lilulì down on the bridge and holds out his arms to Antarès, who stretches out his to receive him.

LILULI vexed.

Am I too heavy? What then? Would you leave me in the middle of the bridge?

ALTAIR

O, my friend!

LILULI takes him by the arm, pulls his hair, pinches him.

Scatter-brain! Impudent sparrow! Fickle man! have you so soon forgotten my golden arms and my kiss?

ALTAÏR pushes her aside impatiently.

My friend, my friend! How do you come here?

ANTARÈS

I am with my people. And what are you doing here?

ALTAÏR

I am leading mine to battle.

ANTARÈS

Whom against?

ALTAÏR

I've quite forgotten.

LILULI prompting him.

Against these people.

ALTAÏR

That means against him!

LILULI

What matter?

ALTAÏR

Ah! You don't know what he is to me, what we are: the Twins! Can one of us live without the other?

He was my companion, my brother; he shared my young dreams, my miseries, my joys, my heart, suffering under the same injustices, drinking intoxication from the same hopes, passing the nights in conquering, with tears and laughter, the mystic continent of the future. We love one another with chastity. Our souls were wedded. He is my all, he is my own self.

LILULI

And what's left for me? Is this the way you love me?

ALTAÏR

Ah, Liluli, forgive me! You are much lovelier and better (or much worse; there are moments when I don't know which)—you are different; and that is why I long to pluck your beauty. But he and I, we possess one another, we are the same. You are the fruit of the Hesperides and we are the Argonauts. The same ship bears us toward the garden of the golden apples.

LILULI

None the less, you see your Twin has deserted your ship, left you, denied you. He is fighting under other flags. Listen to him!

ANTARÈS seeing Liluli, calls her.

My Liluli!

ALTAÏR

Does he love you?

LILULI

Yes, he is betraying you. He wants to ravish me from you.

ALTAÏR

But you love me, you are mine?

LILULI

I belong to the better man, the more valiant. Come, brave lads, take me!

She flies away and perches like a bird on the end of one of the beams of the bridge, overhanging the ravine.

ANTARÈS runs onto bridge toward Liluli.

Wait for me!

ALTAÏR barring his passage.

She is mine!

They face one another menacingly; then, suddenly, their looks grow mild, their arms fall.

ALTAÏR

Ah! my friend!

ANTARÈS

My comrade!

ALTAÏR

Dear eyes, dear hands!

They take one another's hands.

ANTARÈS

Dear smile, dear memories!

ALTAÏR

How I burn to take you in my arms.

They look at one another a moment longer, and embrace one another closely.

LILULI

Clutch him then! Strain together. Come, little men, strain together; come, little ones, for Liluli's sake, strangle each other. Come, my pretty boys, each must sacrifice to me his darling friend. For your Fatherland! The greater the sacrifice, the finer it is. Yes, my friends, yes, that's the truth. Go on, Antarès, Altair! If you love me, offer him to me. Shame on a love that only gives what it doesn't want. Courage! . . . And then, my dear little friends, think—it is an act of piety, in memory of the pure friend cherished long ago, to immolate the friend of to-day who deforms and makes vile the old. Kill one another then, out of pure love, kill one another! come now, my little wolves, come on!

Altaïr and Antarès have come to grips; they struggle violently, roll on the bridge, strike furiously at one another and fall back senseless. On either side the crowd calls to them and stirs with excitement. Liluli comes, flutters above them and drops on their bodies autumn leaves of red and gold.

LILULI

Sleep, my beloveds, sleep! Your task is finished now. Both have served me well. Each of you sacrifices more than his life for me. It is well, it is well: yes, it is thus I must be loved; I bless you. Antarès is dying. My Altaïr, you whom I loved the better, I hear you sighing: you will recover; I keep you that you may suffer. Suffer, die, ye who loved me! Poor fools, it is your delight. Men do not know

how to enjoy life simply, just as it is. I have to crucify them, my lovers. . . . Come, then, all of you, little children! I am Illusion, I am Dream! Whoever loses wins! Whoever would win me, let him lose himself!

POLICHINELLO

No one returns to make complaint. Come on, children of Lilulì!

THE GALLIPOULETS

Our country calls us.

THE HURLUBERLOCHES

Charge for our country, die for our country!

They rush on to the bridge and the battle is joined. Lilulì soars above them and flies away.

POLICHINELLO

The jade! . . . She has got her way! . . . She cares for nothing. Nothing can keep her. She belongs to all and to nobody. But she has turned their brains so completely inside out that they are ready to kill one another for love of her: and each of these fatheads thinks he's going to draw the winning number. Take, take your tickets! Now, gentlemen, the tombola. A free shave to-morrow. To-morrow you win. To-day you pay. It only costs your skin!

CHORUS OF INTELLECTUALS in doggerel verse. They chant in sprightly and monotonous tones, beating time with their whole body.

Ah, isn't it brave—to go down to the grave—when one's quite a boy—one gets all life's joy—and none of its worries, or flurries, or scurries.—If I were in your youthful skin—how gladly I'd battle—or gladlier send—these stupid cattle—to meet their end. —For death and glory I thirst and hunger!—If only I were twenty years younger!

Meanwhile the two peoples, after exchanging a few thumps, have retreated to the entrances of the bridge where they stand, prudently reviling one another and shaking their fists.

THE INTELLECTUALS from the vantage-point of their platform.

But they're not advancing! Let's die, gentlemen,

die! It's the happiest of fates! Come now, let's make up our minds to it.

THE PEOPLE provoking one another.

Come and see! . . . Just wait for me! Take care of yourself if I move! . . . Don't dare jostle me! . . . I will if I like! . . . Try, then! You begin! . . . No, you begin first! . . . Crikey! You've trodden on my toe! . . . No, no, it wasn't me; it was that chap there, behind me—he shoved me. . . . Well, we'll say nothing about it this time. (I've a corn that's crushed.) But if you do it again!

THE GRAND DERVISH

Nothing will come of this. . . . Despite our holy efforts to disgust them with it, these common people, my word! set great store by their wretched mortal bodies! [To the Intellectuals.] And these fellows hold their tongue and don't say a word! . . . Sing, I say, sing, O heroes of the brain!

THE INTELLECTUALS

But one must take breath! My tongue is quite sore with singing. What a trade! We're exhausted. Give us a drink! It's too hot. . . . And to tell the truth, I'd rather sing another tune: I'm not Tyrtaeus. The bugles and drums, beaten with might and main, to lead to the fight these poor dolts fairly burst my ears; I'd rather suck at the whispering flute with tip of

tongue or else the rheumy oboe. For the poet is made to celebrate love and the fields and peace.

POLONIUS rising to his feet.

The traitors! arrest them!

LILULI

So you're being naughty, my little lambs. You won't stand in your pretty ribbons and bleat, and run with a skip into the good butcher's arms. Baa, baa, baa, you'll bleat and skip: we shall make you gambol right enough. Would you like that? I'll go and fetch the dancing-master. She calls, singing like a bird.

Lo, lo, ï . . . Lo, lo, ï . . .
Lop, lop, lop, lop, lop, lop, lop, ï . . .
Lop, ï . . . Lop, ï . . . Lop, ï ni! . . .

[Trill.]

Ni-on, ni-on-ni-on, ni-on, ni-on, ni-on,
Ni-ni-ni-ni . . . Non-ni!
To me, to me, to me, to me!
My cousin, cousin, cousin! . . .

Here the song becomes speech.

Here, come here. My cousin Opinion! Take one spring on to their back. Jab your bony heel into the ass's flank! He will trot willingly—only provided that he is forced to. It is a good people, that pleases me well; I make it swallow anything and all. But the last morsel has stuck and to make it pass you must wash it down with a bumper. Look at them,

gaping-mouthed, waiting for the juice of the heavenly grape to run to the bottom of their throats! So, broach your drink. Drown reason! Opinion!

Ni-on, ni-on, ni-on, non-ni!
To me! To me!

The shriek of a motor-car's siren is heard far off from the bottom of the ravine. This shriek, shrill as a saw at first, then swelling very rapidly, continuous, frantic, is the sonorous axis round which revolves, in a wheel of dust, a whirling cloud of different noises: shouts, shrill fifes, savage yelps, drums precipitously beaten by fevered hands, triangles, bells and gongs.—The whole crowd on the stage stands still, gaping, and makes no further movement, as though hypnotized. But as this tornado of noise approaches, knees are seen to tremble and teeth to chatter, men draw back heads between hunched shoulders like schoolboys awaiting the arrival of the slap. Polichinello subsides, flattens himself out in a hollow behind a rock; nothing can be seen of him except the hump on his back which surmounts the top. Liluli jumps onto a beam of the bridge near the entrance and stands there with legs apart, holding out her arms toward the new-comers, laughing with all her flashing teeth.

Bands of satyrs and gamboling monkeys burst onto the stage, playing on penny whistles or pan-pipes—a strident tune, jerky, burlesque, wild, bouncing. They appear from everywhere, from right and left, from above and below, by all the paths of the mountain and the ravine, on this and on that side of the bridge. They are of all colors, copper red, bronze green, iron black, glossy. Troops of them, breathlessly shouting. In an instant they have enveloped the crowds of both camps, hemming them in with their vertiginous whirling. Fresh swarms of them seem to be continually appearing.

Finally, from the depths of the abyss, up a winding road —its siren shrieking—arrives a fantastic motor made of black steel, low on the ground, with a rhinoceros horn projecting at the prow. Seated on a high throne without a

back, like a Delphic tripod, her legs hanging down, is a thrilling apparition: she is the GODDESS LLOP'HI. She has something in her of a Hindoo divinity, something of the cadaverous woman with uplifted arms in Boecklin's Three Horsemen in his picture of the Apocalypse at Zürich. Her eyes are haggard and glassy, her breasts and belly nude. Over the steering wheel stoops Dürer's Devil [The Knight and Death], wolf-toothed and ass-eared; the BEAST who comes from the depths of the forest of Humanity whither reason has driven him, but who watches and waits for his time. [The time always comes.]

An escort of mounted Cossacks lance in rest or knout raised.

At the moment when the din reaches its summit all is still, all stop suddenly—noises and motions. The apparition

stands as though frozen. The Cossacks, with uplifted arms, fixed in their menace. The satyrs and apes frozen in their gambols. The shattered crowds on their knees, bent backed, the women hiding their heads under their lifted petticoats. A minute of absolute, terrific silence.—Then the goddess drops her arms violently to her sides; the horsemen bring down their hands and crack their whips: the crowds bound to their feet; and goaded by the jostling and pinching of the apes, all rush onto the bridge— from both sides of the bridge—uttering a ferocious barking in which there is nothing human.

Haouah! . . .

The Gallipoulets and Hurluberloches come to grips in the middle of the bridge. General rough and tumble. While the front ranks are toppling into the ravine, the rest follow like a flock of sheep. In the foreground, ranged in front of the motor, now facing the audience, and on the prow of which stands Dürer's Beast leaning forward, his forefeet planted on the edge like a gargoyle, the procession of distinguished Gallipoulets files past. They are of all ages and complexions, all heights and dimensions, tied together in Indian file with a chain round their necks. They dance, grimace, shout, wave tomahawks, under the orders of an enormous negro, clad only in a loin-cloth, who rolls his eyes and dances backwards, keeping his face to the captives.

THE FETTERED BRAINS singing and dancing.

We are the brains, the free men, characters built of tempered steel, proud souls, supple and firm like a Toledo blade. Always faithful to the man who holds us. What must be done is his business. We do not bother about anything. He who holds us is the handle, we are the blade. The handle changes, the blade remains. Always faithful to the new handle as long as it holds us. Hold us fast! Always ready to slash,

gash, clip or emasculate either James or John or Zebedee. For we are of pure steel, ready to strike to right or left, where you will. Even if your heart smiles at the notion, we will even commit *hara-kiri.*

THE NEGRO stimulating them.

Up there, you Brains! Higher! Higher! Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho! Bend! Jump! Turn! Jump! Blow out your bellies! Twist your haunches! Mark the beat with back and heel, the beat, the tango beat! Kick up behind! before! Up and down! High! Higher! Higher!

THE INTELLECTUALS looking down from their tribune.

O how I love these capers and dancing—these rhythmic hops and cadenced prancing,—the move-

ments of free men advancing.—By order they dance the complex figures:—then both to white and sable niggers—all honor be! All honor be—to Pyrrhic steps and these brave minions—all honor to the heroes keen—lovers of our august queen—Opinion!

Battle and hubbub. One troop of Gallipoulets breaks through the Hurluberloches and pursues them on the further bridge. Another troop of Hurluberloches breaks through Gallipoulets and pursues them on the near side of the bridge. On either side pursued and pursuers climb the paths above the stage on the left, continuing all the time to thump one another and yell.—Meanwhile the Fettered Brains have gone dancing across the bridge, passing in mid-bridge another file of Fettered Brains, who are crossing in the opposite direction and who come dancing over to take the places of the first troop.—During this time the Intellectuals, having talked well, look on, rest and quench their thirst, mopping their foreheads after their heroic labor.—But Dürer's Beast, who has got down from the motor, slowly walks round the Chorus and looks at them with a chuckle. No more is needed to make the Intellectuals hastily go back to their places and start their singing again.

The stage is cleared little by little. The combatants have disappeared in the upper parts of the mountain. There only remain on the stage the motionless car of the petrified goddess, the docile chorus of Intellectuals on its platform and the two files of Fettered Brains, dancing in the silence, like a grotesque frieze, along either bank of the ravine—no one else.

But, yes; over there, aloof in his field, is Janot, still digging away. Dürer's Beast comes and sniffs at him. Quietly, unhurriedly, trotting along on its ass's feet, it goes to him. It halts a couple of paces away, its tongue hanging out like a wolf. Janot, whose back is turned, feels its breath. He looks up, turns round, sees the motionless Beast, drops his spade, stands, mouth open, arms hanging loose; then hurriedly, with rounded back and bent head, avoiding

a look at the Beast, he goes to his browsing ass, slips the bridle round its neck, mounts and makes for the bridge.

On the bridge Janot encounters a Hurluberlochian Sancho, a pacific and ventripotent personage, straddling a mule. The road is narrow; there is only room for one. Neither one has the slightest wish to damage the other. They would be ready to make room, and are indeed already being polite to one another, were it not for the noisy men in the rear.

JANOT on his ass and HANSOT on his mule. (The four beasts meet nose to nose.)

Ho! Ho!

They stand at a halt, perplexed, examining one another.

HANSOT

Fine day.

JANOT

Warm day.

A pause.

HANSOT

Well! Good morning to you.

JANOT

Good day to you, then.

A pause. They look at one another, laughing foolishly.

JANOT

And where may you be going to?

HANSOT

Over there. I was taking a ride.

JANOT pointing to his ass.

I was giving him an airing.

HANSOT politely.

He's handsome.

He is speaking of the ass.

JANOT returning the compliment.

He's fat.

He says this of the mule.

HANSOT squinting in the direction of the torrent.

It's deep down under there.

JANOT

The devil! One might fall. [Neither dares to budge. A pause.] Perhaps I'm in your way? Would you like to get past?

HANSOT

Not at all, not at all; it's my fault. . . . Beg pardon, I'm sure.

JANOT

We ought to go back.

HANSOT

We ought. . . . Won't you?

JANOT

Won't you? . . . O, me?—I've got plenty of time.

HANSOT

I'm in no hurry.

A pause.

JANOT

Perhaps we might both go back.

HANSOT

Together. Both of us. . . . That's it. . . . Let's go back.

THE SPECTATORS IN THE REAR indignant exclamations from both sides of the bridge.

Janot! Janot! . . . Hansot! . . . What are you doing, you wretch? Don't give way an inch! . . . 's blood, man, go forward! . . . Janot, think of your ancestors! Hansot, think of fame! See, she smiles on you! . . . Honor demands that one of you must have the other's skin. . . . Skin him, skin him! The skin! His skin! Your skin! Scrag him! . . . Strike away, warriors, on your chargers! . . . Gee up, then! on with you, jackass! . . . Conquer or die! Magnificent fate! . . . Die, heroes!

The Intellectuals have come down from their platform and are grouped round the entrance to the bridge, blocking the retreat. The Fettered Brains shove on either side and flog the two palfreys with might and main. Master-God, on the other side of the bridge, appears, with an ineffable smile, at a window in a cloud. Illusion hovers suspended above the bridge, with palms and a trumpet. And Dürer's Devil, having scrambled up a rock overhanging the ravine, sits gargoyle-wise over against Master-God. *"Deux augures . . ."* Janot and Hansot twist their necks in all directions in hope of finding some impossible issue, but are made to start back every time by some exhortation bursting forth from every corner of the earth and sky; they begin at last to roll their eyes and affront one another with heroic starts.

JANOT

That's enough of it now. Clear out! I've seen you. I've had my bellyful of looking at you.

HANSOT

It gives me the gripes, it does. All I ask is never to see your Lenten face again.

JANOT

Lenten face? . . . Tripes! . . . Double moon-face! You Shrove Tuesday!

HANSOT

Stock-fish!

JANOT

Haggis!

They jostle one another a little.

HANSOT

Hi, sir, take care; take care! . . . A little more and both of us were gone.

JANOT

Both? . . . Brrr!

They prudently draw apart; but the people behind push them back.

JANOT in a lower voice to Hansot.

Do go away!

HANSOT ditto.

I'd like nothing better.

THE FETTERED BRAINS flogging the ass and mule till they plunge.

Forward!

JANOT AND HANSOT defending themselves vainly against those who push them on.

But it isn't prudent!

LILULI amiably.

Go for it, nicely and gently!

THE INTELLECTUALS hurt.

Is it going to come off to-day?

MASTER-GOD consequentially.

My sons, we're waiting for you. Your beds are made.

JANOT

Where?

MASTER-GOD

In Paradise.

JANOT

Thanks, I prefer my straw.

LILULI strewing a shower of leaves over Janot and Hansot with affected, languishing, sly gestures.

And here is laurel, some laurel, laurel, laurel for your pillows!

JANOT AND HANSOT

Enough! Enough!

LILULI

Bay leaves. . . .

JANOT

Do you take me for roast game?

The Goddess Opinion (Llô-p'ih) hitherto impassive, petrified, makes a violent gesture. The siren hoots. All start and, inspired with renewed zeal, hurl themselves on Janot and Hansot.

ALL

Get on! No more talking!

THE FETTERED BRAINS

Kill! Kill! Kill!

LILULI sounding her trumpet, charmingly.

Tootle-te-tootle.

Janot and Hansot pushed one against the other, are on the brink of the precipice.

JANOT

But you don't realize! There's only one little fooling needed. . . .

LILULI

All's well. We've two fools here.

ALL

Will you get together?

LILULI

Come now; jump, Janot!

ALL

Jump! Jump! You toad!

HANSOT pushing Janot, who pushes back.

Go on, they're calling you!

JANOT

You pass first!

They seize and thump one another.

LILULI

Don't stand on ceremony, my fine fellows! Pass abreast!

Janot and Hansot tumble fraternally together—over the bridge.

THE INTELLECTUALS in two half-choruses on either side of the ravine, bend forward to look.

They are passing. They have passed. [All together.] Oh, what an epical spectacle! Down they roll, they roll, they roll! "A rolling stone gathers no moss." God! how steep! An avalanche! A glorious chill of an heroic sweat moistens me all up my back! . . . Don't lean over too far! . . . *In profundis*. . . . *Sic transit*. . . . [With a little whistle.] Whew! They're dead! What a sublime fate! [Straightening themselves up pompously.] Gentlemen, they live in us, and in our memories. Let's go and have a drink! . . . O, my adorable soul, my soul, how beautiful you are! From

plagues and pests, from the blows, wounds, bumps, thumps and death of other people, O my soul, thou makest thy honey. All is, and all has ceased to be, in order that thou mayst sing of it. Peasants, bleed and die! All for the sake of my song.—Happy mortals! How lucky they are! . . . O my soul, I love you! Ever purer, ever lovelier, O my inspired soul, fly, fly toward Elysium! . . . [Changing their tone.] And now that these good peoples have hobnobbed together, come, let us go, let us rest on their laurels! Up, gentlemen, let us mount to the Capitol!

LILULI

Mount, Capitoline geese!

THE INTELLECTUALS

Let us mount!

THE GODS

Upward.

Heroic march.—Solemnly, solemnly they wend their way up the mountain path in single file. Lilulí walks behind, like a goose-girl, whipping them on with her palm branch. All this time the shouting of the people still fighting in the upper regions of the mountain can be heard.

The stage is slowly cleared. The Intellectuals and Lilulí vanish at the turn of the path. Master-God has closed his shutter and retired behind his cloud. Llôp'ih and her motor descend once more into the abyss.

In the shade of a rock Polichinello's hump can be seen in motion. He gets up cautiously, twists his neck in all directions like a blackbird, then, reassured, turns toward the audience a face convulsed with dumb laughter. His humps, his cocked hat, his nose, his chin, all laugh; his whole body is shaken with laughter; but not a sound comes out of him.

POLICHINELLO to the audience.

They haven't got me. Laughing is safe.

A frightful din is heard; it comes tumbling down from above like a cataract.

POLICHINELLO

Holy Gum! . . . Down they come!

Everything collapses upon him, the fighting people, furniture, crockery, poultry, stones,

earth and all. Polichinello disappears under the heap. A cloud of dust and noise envelops the scene.—On top of the mound sits Liluli, her legs crossed, smiling and showing her teeth and the tip of her tongue; laying her forefinger to her nose. Sententiously she says:

A wise man has said:

"Wait, ere you laugh and mock, my friend,
At fate, until—The End."